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VARIOUS TRACTS.

By the Reverend JAMES PENN, A. B.

Under Grammar-Maſter of Chriſt-Hoſpital,

AND

Curate of the United Pariſhes of St. Ann and Agnes and St. John Zachary, Alderſgate.

Scire tuum nihil eſt niſi te ſcire hoc ſciat alter. PERSIUS.

LONDON:

Printed by C. SAY, in Newgate-ſtreet, for the AUTHOR.

MDCCLVII.

TO THE

SUBSCRIBERS.

I HAVE endeavoured to render this Work uſeful and entertaining; I hope, therefore, it will merit your Eſteem. I muſt beſpeak your Candour in the Letters from the Dead: For as the Language, in which they were wrote, is a dead Language, but little known to the Living, Miſtakes and Errors will undoubtedly occur in the Tranſlation, and much of the Spirit of the Originals be loſt. I hope you will excuſe the not inſerting, amongſt other Tracts, *The Reaſonableneſs of aboliſhing Chriſti-*

 anity,

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anity, till after the Return of the next Packet from Tartarus and Paradiſe; that I may be certified from thoſe Places, what I may loſe or gain in the next, ſince I am not to gain but loſe by the Publication of it in this World. You may, indeed, be ſurpriſed, that a Work ſo uſeful, ſo generally wanted, and ſo properly adapted to the Times, wherein Infidelity and Immorality are daily acquiring a Superiority over Virtue and Religion, ſhould have met with any Diſcouragement. Upon the Arrival of the Packet, which is hourly expected, the Tract will be put to the Preſs, printed in the ſame Manner as the reſt, and delivered free from any Expence,

By your moſt obliged

Chriſt-Hoſpital, London. humble Servant,

JAMES PENN.

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THE

THE FAIR SEX VINDICATED FROM FOLLY and EXTRAVAGANCE.

TO vindicate the Character of the innocent and undeſerving, from Calumny and Reproach, has been ever eſteemed the Mark of an ingenuous and benevolent Diſpoſition. A fairer Proſpect of acquiring that Title cannot be offered, than from the preſent Undertaking. It may be difficult to execute it with Succeſs, becauſe it is oppoſing vulgar Errors, in which a Man frequently riſks the Credit of his Underſtanding, without any Advantage in Reverſion. The Cauſe however is fair, though it has

been mal-treated from Adam to this preſent Time: It has had few, if any ſincere, Advocates. Commendations have generally ended in ſevere Reflections; in which Ill-Nature has oftentimes exceeded Truth. When loſt in Admiration of their Virtues, and unwilling to acknowledge a Superiority, we ſeek Relief from Scandal and Defamation.

It might have been expected that ſome Fair would have apologized for her Sex: That it has not been done, may have rather proceeded from Modeſty, than Inability; who had rather ſuffer Reproach wrongfully, than reproach juſtly. Who then is to undertake it? Are not the Males unwilling and afraid, leſt by ſpeaking the Truth they ſhould ſay too much in their Praiſe, and by giving them their Due they might leſſen their own Weight and Authority? It is the common Practice of little Minds to rail and exclaim againſt ſuperior Worth and Merit, with the fond Hopes of acquiring Reputation by it: And it has not always proved unſucceſsful. This falſe and low Humour has been ſo much encouraged againſt the Fair, that a Cuſtom once thought to have been peculiar to them, has by conſtant Uſe become our own.

To

To ſilence the preſent, and prevent future Clamours, and to procure them that Reſpect and Civility, which the Tenderneſs and Delicacy of their Sex, if not their Merit claim, I have undertaken their Defence. What is written, I hope, will be received with Temper and Candour, as I am entirely diſintereſted; being rather prejudiced againſt them, if we are to form our Judgment of Things according to vulgar Notions *.

Before we vindicate the Daughters, it may not be impertinent to offer ſomething in Vindication of the Mother; who has been reviled and abuſed in all Ages, for what ſhould rather be an Object of Pity, than Reſentment; whoſe Misfortune it was, not Fault, that ſhe was not created impeccable †. It may not be eaſy to bring the Mind to think well of thoſe, of whom we have entertained a light or mean Opinion; nor to look upon thoſe Opinions, which Time and Cuſtom have eſtabliſhed, to be wrong. Errors, when they favour our Vanity, or excuſe our Follies, meet with a too kind Reception, and are the longeſt retained; they are with difficulty removed,

* Being married.

† Eve, whoſe miſtake has ſerved for a conſtant Reproach of the Fair.

when authorized by Antiquity, and ſupported by Learning.

Our original Parents have been frequently, but unjuſtly, blamed by their Offspring, for what they are equally blameable, the tranſgreſſing the Divine Commands. We are now as little governed and directed by Reaſon, as they once were; the Laws of God of as little Force and Obligation; and our Paſſions and Senſes as ſtrongly ſollicit and allure to unlawful Gratifications.

Some have been ſo weak, and ſo ignorant of themſelves as to have imagined, that had they been placed in the ſame delightful Situation, they ſhould have retained their Innocence, and not to indulge a vain, and which proved to be a fatal Curioſity, have ſought for greater Knowledge, or coveted more pleaſing Enjoyments: But can we now maintain our Innocence? Why ſhould it then be thought, that we could have preſerved it?

It is not the preſent Deſign to take Notice of the Reflections thrown out againſt the unhappy Pair; their Guilt needs no Aggravation. It was Affliction enough to them, that they had offended ſo gracious a Creator, and excluded themſelves, and their yet pure and untainted Offspring, from the bliſ-

ful

ful Enjoyment of an earthly Paradiſe. My Intention is to extenuate, not excuſe the Crime of one, whom none of us, had we beheld, could have blamed; none of us but would, as Adam did, have ſinned with her; or would not have died, rather than have lived without her. He was comfortleſs, before he had her; he was rather unfortunate, than unhappy in having her; and he would have been miſerable, had he not continued with her. To whom ſhould he communicate his Joys, if Joys he could have had any, when he had no Being like himſelf to converſe with? What Miſery inexpreſſible to have been deprived of Happineſs, little as it is now prized, then ſcarce enjoyed? Without whom, Exiſtence would not have been deſirable. Adam confeſſed as much, by the Uneaſineſs he expreſſed, before he received her, and God allowed the Uneaſineſs to have been juſt, by beſtowing upon him a Conſort.

That Sex, who is on ſeveral Accounts the Source of all the Happineſs we enjoy, is commonly, but ungenerouſly, complained of, as the Cauſe of all the Calamities we ſuffer: For allowing, that by the Woman's Miſtake Sin was introduced into the World, by the ſame Mean the Guilt of it was can-

celled: And if Eve through the Weakneſs, rather than the Fault of Human Nature expoſed us to everlaſting Puniſhment, by the Seed of the Bleſſed Virgin everlaſting Glory is offered to us.

Ceaſe we then from Complaints againſt Eve, and no more upbraid the Daughters for the Parents Fault; who though they have too often the leaſt, are deſerving of the higheſt Reſpect. Men of Senſe and Judgment know their Value and Merit: And none but thoſe of little Underſtanding exclaim againſt them; to palliate and excuſe their own Follies, they detract from their Worth.

There may be ſome of the Sex no great Honour and Ornament to it: But of thoſe there are few, who are ſo through their own Fault. It may have been their Misfortune to have placed too great Confidence in our Sex: And the Wrongs and Injuries received from us have been, and too often are the Occaſion of the Crimes and Follies committed by them. So that for one Adam betrayed by an Eve, many of her Daughters have, through artful and deluſive Promiſes, loſt their Virtue, their Innocence, and their Eaſe.

If

If it was rightly, it certainly was not kindly done in Adam, ſo ſoon to have left her. How much deſired, how greatly longed for, before ſhe came; and when received, how ſoon neglected. We might be ſurpriſed at ſuch ungenerous Treatment, did not modern Examples ſhew, that fond and paſſionate Deſires, when gratified, ſoon become cool and indifferent; and thoſe, for whom we lately expreſſed the moſt tender and endearing Affections, are forſaken and deſerted, or treated rather as Slaves of brutiſh Luſt than Objects of chaſte and pure Love. By leaving her alone ſhe was more expoſed to the Attacks of the Tempter, and more liable to be ſeduced by his artful Suggeſtions; who, it is probable for obvious Reaſons, would not have accoſted her in the Preſence of her Huſband: That ſhe erred therefore, may have been owing to a Want of Affection in him.

Another Complaint againſt Eve is her unparallelled Baſeneſs and Cruelty, in knowingly ſeducing Adam into a Commiſſion of Sin, and thereby involving him and his Poſterity in the Puniſhment of it. Her Love and Affection, if ſhe had any, would ſurely have withheld her from ſo foul an Act—You have before ſeen, what Love and

Affection ſhe owed to one, who ſeemed to have expoſed her as a Prey to the Tempter. But what is urged as a Motive to have diſſuaded her from it, her Love and Affection, was the real Cauſe of doing it: When having ate of the Fruit ſhe found, that the Puniſhment was not immediately inflicted, as it had been threatened, ſo far from imagining that ſhe had done wrong, ſhe might have naturally entertained Hopes of receiving the promiſed good; and full of theſe hopes ſhe haſtens to her Huſband, and perfectly innocent and free from any Deſign of doing him any Injury, (for ſhe herſelf had ſuffered none) offers to him the Fruit; that if any good, as ſhe expected, would follow, he might be equally partaker of it with her.

The ſacred Hiſtorian ſufficiently clears Eve from this Baſeneſs, acquainting us that what ſhe did, was before ſhe was ſenſible of the Folly committed; which ſhe did not diſcover, till after Adam, cheriſhing the ſame Expectations, had complied with her Requeſt: *Then the Eyes of them both were opened, and they knew, that they were naked.* Nor could Adam juſtly reproach her, becauſe he knew his Duty, and the Conſequence of tranſgreſſing it had been plainly communicated to him; yet when God expoſtulated

poſtulated with him, he endeavoured by an artful and mean Inſinuation to excuſe himſelf, by accuſing his Wife as the Aggreſſor, and ſaying that what he had done was through Ignorance: *And he ſaid, the Woman whom thou gaveſt to be with me, ſhe gave me of the Tree and I did eat.* But he needed no Perſuaſives, to what of himſelf he was too well diſpoſed; no Motives to induce him to the fatal Act, but what before had engaged his Conſort, the pleaſing and inviting proſpect of becoming wiſer, than he was.

Weak and unjuſt then was the Apology, unleſs it can be ſuppoſed, that ſhe gave him of the Fruit, without acquainting him from what Tree it was taken: But this is Malice ſo great, Behaviour ſo ungenerous, that none but the Author of our Miſery could be engaged in it. It was his own free and voluntary Act; he muſt otherwiſe have been an Object of Mercy, not Juſtice.

Though we cannot excuſe, we may further extenuate the Guilt of Eve. The ſacred Hiſtory is ſilent as to any extraordinary or divine Communication of the Law to Eve, as had been given to Adam: Her Obligations therefore to Obedience were not ſo ſtrong and powerful; from him, not from

God

God ſhe learnt her Duty. This it was, that made the Attempt of Satan ſucceſsful; this it was, that prevailed with her to credit the ſaying, *that though ſhe ate of the Tree, ſhe ſhould not ſurely die*; for ſhe might have imagined, that her Huſband might have been miſtaken as to the Conſequence of Sin; which Belief or Perſuaſion, if real, muſt have powerfully urged her to the unhappy Deed: And the contrary Opinion cannot be collected from the Context. This ſeems to have been the Reaſon, why Satan addreſſed himſelf to Eve, rather than Adam; becauſe he had received the Law immediately from God himſelf, and conſequently was not ſo eaſy to have been impoſed upon, or deceived by an artful Miſrepreſentation of it.

Having endeavoured to ſet forth the true Character of Eve in this important and intereſting Affair, which through Prejudice, rather than Ignorance, has hitherto been concealed, I ſhall now undertake to vindicate her Daughters of the preſent Age from the Follies and Crimes, with which they have been with the ſame Injuſtice aſperſed by thoſe, who are better read in Effects, than underſtand, or may be willing to enquire into the Cauſes, that have produced them.

The

The firſt Complaint is, *that they are extravagant and indecent in their Dreſs; that they take up ſo much Time, to uſe the Language of the Apoſtle, in plaiting of the Hair, and putting on of Apparel, that they ſeem as if made for none other Purpoſe: And the Manner of adjuſting their Trinkets is ſo negligent and unſeemly, that Chaſtity is almoſt exploded, and Modeſty has loſt her native Charm, and knows not how to bluſh*—Granting all this to be true; can you expect that there ſhould be Sarah's, when there are no Abraham's? Muſt not the Women dreſs ſo as to pleaſe their Huſbands? What therefore they do, is in Obedience to their Commands, not to ſuit their own Taſte: And they are fond of and admire the Faſhions, becauſe they too well perceive and know, that they are the beſt Recommendations to their Favour and Eſteem. It is your Weakneſs, but their Prudence to conform to the reigning Manners of the Age: And I wiſh, that it was as reaſonable, as it ſeems to be expedient; as conformable to the Rules of Decency and Modeſty, as it is neceſſary for the Sex, thus to ſhew their Love and Affection for you.

You ſee then the Cauſe of theſe Follies, and if they really appear to be ſuch, as Opportunities offer, you muſt condemn, not approve;

approve; muſt expreſs a Diſtaſte for, not diſcover any Pleaſure in them. But if the Modes in Taſte delight, you muſt not complain of the Expence in ſupporting them, nor upbraid them, if to be ſubſervient to your Will they are frequently expoſed, and ſometimes fall into Temptations, that may prove dangerous to their Virtue and your Eaſe.

As this Reformation is not likely to begin, where it ſhould, I ſhall make uſe of one Motive to induce the Fair to the good Work; That the Men encourage and indulge you in theſe Vanities, leſt by ſtudying the Improvement of the Mind, you ſhould be found to exceed them as much in good Senſe, as you now do (though oftentimes at the Expence of Religion and the Abuſe of a fine Underſtanding,) in Dreſs and Complaiſance.

The ſecond Complaint is, *that they are exceſſively fond of the publick Diverſions and Entertainments*—From whom is it that they receive Invitations to thoſe Places? Who are their Companions and Aſſociates? If it is out of Vanity or Pride to make an Appearance, who are they that ſit as Spectators? Is not our own Sex as paſſionately fond of Amuſements? Innocent if not indulged,

dulged, but criminal when our Circumſtances will not permit us to partake of them, or they are ſuch as will corrupt our Morals, or draw us off from attending upon the neceſſary Duties and Engagements in Life.

But if any bad Effects ſhould follow from frequenting thoſe Places, the Cenſure ſhould not come from thence, where the Example is ſet. It is very common, though ridiculous and abſurd, to throw out Reflections, when we are equally culpable with the Aggreſſors; to condemn thoſe Follies in others, which if not openly, we may ſecretly practiſe. The beſt way to reform the Abuſes complained of in others, is firſt to clear ourſelves from Suſpicions of Guilt. Abſtinence would be badly recommended by a Glutton; Temperance, from a Drunkard; Chaſtity, from a Debauchee: And certainly Declamations againſt Pleaſures will be idly and vainly employed by thoſe, who gladly embrace every Opportunity of partaking of them. If then you would diſengage their Affections, you muſt avoid being ſeen at thoſe Places; the contrary Behaviour muſt rather excite, than allay Deſire.

The third Complaint is, *that when they are not diverting themſelves abroad, the Time is ſpent at Home, not in reading good and pious Books,*

Books, but Novels, Romances, and the Hiſtories of Rakes and Proſtitutes.—I wiſh that we did not firſt write them, and afterwards recommend the Peruſal; which are read by many, rather to make themſelves agreeable Company, than from an Approbation of ſuch Writings; for the Faſhion is ſo general, that a Perſon ignorant of them appears to great Diſadvantage in Company, with no little Reflection upon his Taſte.

The Prejudice they are of to our Morals, is much greater than commonly imagined. The Plainneſs and Simplicity of the Stile, the Wit and Humour interſperſed, and the Story pleaſantly related, are powerful Recommendations in their Favour. But their Words though ſmoother than Oil, are as Daggers in the Heart; like the Flatterers ſoft pernicious Tongue they ſtrike the Paſſions, but hurt the Underſtanding; like Lightning they pierce us with the Arrows of Death, before we ſuſpect any Danger; and we loſe our Virtue, as Men loſe their Lives by Aſſaſſins, without knowing from whence the Wound is given. They pleaſe our Imagination, but ſpoil us of our Virtue; they amuſe indeed and entertain, but it is often at the Expence of Innocence in Reverſion; they never made one Libertine

honeſt, but have enſnared many an Innocent into Miſery and Ruin. It would be of conſiderable Benefit to the Cauſe of Virtue and Piety, and the Deſtruction not of a true but falſe Taſte, to have ſuch Writings ſuppreſſed: It would be the Means of promoting real, not imaginary knowledge, and we ſhould be read in that, which would make us both wiſer and better.

The fourth Complaint is, *that they are not ſuch fond Mothers, nor ſuch good Houſewives, as the Patriarchal Dames; who thought it no Diſgrace to rear their own Offspring, and inſpect into the Affairs of the Family.*— That the Pattern is not imitated, is true; there would be fewer Bankruptcies and leſs Misfortunes if it was. But who are to blame? Thoſe who reproach. To preſerve a fine Shape, and appear in publick Company to an Advantage, the Tenderneſs and Affection of the Parent are given up, and Nature is forced to ſubmit to Faſhion. This is done to oblige the fine Gentleman, who commands it, and who cannot bear the Noiſe of the ſqualling Brat, *&c.* The Texture of his Brain is ſo fine, and Stomach ſo delicate, as to be in Danger of receiving an Injury from it. Thus the Weakneſs of

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the Woman is pretended to excuſe the Fantaſticalneſs and Effeminacy of the Man.

The fifth Complaint is, *that they are not, what in a moſt ſolemn Manner they have profeſſed to be, obedient and ſubmiſſive to their Huſbands; the Scriptures alſo require, that they ſhould ſo be in every Thing.*—Do not the ſame Scriptures require, that Huſbands ſhould honour them, ſpeak kindly and tenderly, and love them as themſelves? That Obedience is not paid, proceeds not from Contumacy. The Perſons who demand it, are generally of a Tyrannical Diſpoſition, and little deſerving of it. Matrimony is a federal Rite, wherein two Parties mutually and voluntarily conſent upon certain Conditions to take each other: And it is upon the Performance of thoſe Conditions, that Obedience is claimed, and will undoubtedly be paid, when they are by the other Party performed. Where Love and Kindneſs are, there Eſteem and Reſpect will be.

Though the Treatment which Socrates received from Xantippe, was not very becoming, yet ſhe might have had Reaſons for being angry. The Philoſopher perhaps got the better of the Huſband; his fondneſs of Letters might have leſſened his Affection, and rendered him an unſociable

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Creature. Happy however would it be for the Sex to have a Socrates. This would be rather accounted a Bleſſing, than a Miſfortune, compared with what they ſuffer from the Churl, the Sot, the Fop and the Fool; the miſerable Portion of many a Fair. If to ſuch any Obedience is paid, any Reſpect ſhewn, it is more than they merit, more than they can have any Pretenſion to, either from Reaſon or Scripture: It ſeems to be a Work of Supererogation.

I am not for depriving the Man of his natural Authority, but adviſing him not to exceed the Rules of Prudence and Moderation in the Exerciſe of it, and it will then have the proper Effect. But when Commands are the Reſult of a perverſe and capricious Humour, and Obedience is made the Cloak for Slavery, it is no wonder, that galled with ſuch cruel and ungenerous Treatment, they ſhould not appear paſſive.

The ſixth Complaint is *againſt their private Converſation, which abounds with Scandal and Cenſure.*—The Complaint is not without Foundation. I know not how it is, that a Practice ſo univerſally condemned as weak, ridiculous and abſurd, ſhould ſo univerſally prevail: But it is not confined to the Tea Table. Though the other Sex is

ſeverely and unfairly treated on that Account, we are equally, if not more culpable. What are Coffee-Houſes, but Places where the Men daily aſſemble to talk and hear Slander and Defamation? What are Clubs, but ſet Meetings for the ſame Purpoſes? The Cenſures of the Fair, which are generally confined to Things pertaining to Taſte, Politeneſs and Dreſs, are not ſo dangerous and miſchievous in their Conſequences as thoſe, which concern the Moral, Mercantile, or Political Conduct and Behaviour of Men. The Lady may be chagrined, and have the Vapours for a Time from ſuch Indelicacies; but the Man loſes his Credit and Reputation by ſuch injurious Treatment. It will be better therefore to drop the Complaint, 'till we ourſelves are free from the Vice complained of; ſince Accuſations will be only Aggravations of our own Guilt, and the Judgment we paſs upon them, be only pronouncing Sentence againſt ourſelves.

The ſeventh Complaint is, *that they come to Church not from a Senſe of Duty or Devotion, but to make an Appearance, and ſee the Modes and Faſhions of Dreſs.*—Allowing it to be true, is it not better to come in any Manner, than not to come at all? Is it not better,

better, than to ſet a bad Example to Servants and Dependants, by junketting at home, or taking Pleaſure abroad? It may in the End have this good Effect, that as they are there ſhewn the Way to Heaven, it may be fairly preſumed, and charitably hoped, that ſome Time or other they will take it into Conſideration, and think about going thither: But no ſuch good Effect can be expected, or even hoped for, when the Service is not only neglected, but Attenddance not given.

That their Behaviour is offenſive to the pious and devout, is eaſier ſaid, than proved: For where true Devotion is, there the Mind is ſo intent upon the Heavenly Subject, as neither to ſee, nor regard, nor attend to any other Object. We may therefore juſtly ſuppoſe, that thoſe who make the Complaint, are but little acquainted with the Nature or Practice of Devotion; and the pious and devout, who are offended, to be thoſe who are as fond of gazing, as the others of being gazed at, and uſe this Plea to excuſe and palliate their own Negligence and Irreverence.

It is much to be wiſhed, that there was a little more Devotion in both Sexes: But it ſhould not be concealed, that they are

more regular and conſtant in their Attendance at Divine Worſhip. Whether it proceeds from a real or pretended Piety, it deſerves our Praiſe and Commendation; ſince the Example is good, and it ſhews a Regard for Decency and Order; which cannot be ſaid of thoſe, who frequently abſent, or only come when it ſuits their Humour, or the Weather will not permit them to go elſewhere.

The eighth Complaint is *againſt the Vice of Gaming, as if their Pride and Vanity were not ſufficient to exhauſt our Treaſure and Subſtance.*—Their Conduct ſeems rather an Object of Pity than Reſentment, when at an unfavourable Caſt we ſee the Fair loſing all the Tenderneſs and Lovelineſs of her Sex. The Fault may be extenuated, not excuſed. Cards and Dice, it is probable, were at firſt uſed by them to divert the many melancholy Hours they were alone: But as from an innocent Amuſement Gaming has been made a Buſineſs by the other Sex, the Example has been imitated by the Fair; who think, that it cannot be criminal nor unlawful to endeavour to recover by Cards and Dice, what their Huſbands have loſt by Cock-Fightings and Horſe Races; or if there is any Pleaſure in Gaming, that they

they have a Right to partake of it, ſince they only hazard the Loſs of what the others are not diſpoſed to preſerve. As few are in the End great Gainers by this Vice, ſince what has been acquired one Day, has been oftentimes ſucceeded by a much greater Loſs the next, it would be better for both and their Families, if they were to practiſe it leſs.

The ninth Complaint is, *that they not only appear negligent in domeſtick Affairs, their peculiar Province, but are apt to intrude into Matters, with which they have no Concern.*— How far it may be right, I know not; but it is prudent in the Woman, if ſhe has a Capacity for Buſineſs, to acquaint herſelf with it. The Man who has a real Regard for the future Welfare and Proſperity of his Family, would encourage and indulge an uſeful, not a vain Curioſity. In Caſe of Accidents or Death, they would not be, as they too often are through Ignorance, made the Prey of the artful and deſigning, or for want of this Knowledge be obliged to give up a decent and comfortable Subſiſtence.

Little Injury, but much good, has proceeded from ſuch a Communication. Many have proved worthy of the Confidence placed in them: And their Company has

been both ſerviceable and agreeable. There have been Inſtances, if they are rare and uncommon, which may have happened for Want of proper Encouragement, wherein that Sex has appeared with equal if not ſuperior Advantages to us. But it is Time to have done with a Complaint, of which the Sex, if guilty, are rather deſerving of Commendation than Cenſure, ſince this inquiſitive Humour is exerciſed from pure Love and Regard for our Intereſt.

The tenth Complaint is *againſt the not imitating the Examples of ancient Matrons in Frugality and Oeconomy.*—The Complaint may be true, but it is imprudent in us to make it; unleſs we imagine, that from cenſuring Vices in others, we ſhould be thought to poſſeſs the oppoſite Virtues. I wiſh that this was not the principal Motive for cenſuring. The weak and ignorant have been impoſed upon by it, and led to entertain an high Opinion of thoſe, who publickly condemn Vices, which they have been found to have had no Averſion to in private.

This Practice has been generally followed, becauſe it has generally proved ſucceſsful. It is a Practice, that ſhould not be diſcouraged, where it may be followed with

with Succeſs; becauſe it not only diſplays the Excellency and Amiableneſs of Virtue, but renders Vice odious and infamous, which has oftentimes had good Effect upon the Vulgar.

But our Cenſures againſt the Fair here loſe their Weight and Force; for we are alike faulty. Extravagance and Prodigality are Vices, though not univerſally practiſed in the Age we live, as ſome weak Perſons have aſſerted, too viſible to be denied. *Never ſure was there ſuch an Age as this*, has been the Cant Term in all Ages to repreſent the Follies of the People. It is a popular Expreſſion, and therefore has been received; for the Vulgar is more fond of railing and exclaiming, than praiſing and commending. But for the Credit of the preſent Age, I will venture to aſſert, notwithſtanding I may provoke the Reſentment of modern Declaimers, that, compared with ſome Times, we are Saints; and though it is not ſo good, as it ought to be, yet there is no Reaſon for looking upon this Land to be an Hell, and the Inhabitants of it, a few excepted, to be Devils.

To return to the Complaint, the beſt Cenſure we can beſtow upon the Sex, is to ſet a Pattern of Frugality in ourſelves: And

it need not be doubted, but they who are fond of imitating us even in our Foibles, will not be backward in following us here. It will be in vain to urge the Neceſſity and Uſefulneſs, of what our own Conduct ſhews, that we have a Diſtaſte for. The beſt Recommendation of any Virtue is Example; which oftentimes influences, when Precepts fail. It is for the private Intereſt and Happineſs of both to practiſe it, and it may be of ſome Uſe to the Publick; though it does not receive that Detriment from the contrary Practice, as commonly imagined. Thoſe Vices tend to the impoveriſhing of a few, and the enriching many. Trade in ſome of its Branches flouriſhes: And as long as the Artizan, the Manufacturer, and the Merchant are encouraged, and receive the Reward of their Labour and Induſtry, though private Evils, they cannot be properly termed publick Nuſances. If only things uſeful and neceſſary were to be ſought for and procured, as ſome gravely tell us, though it is not eaſy for them to ſay what is ſtrictly uſeful and neceſſary, Trade and Commerce would be at an End; Parts and Ingenuity, which are juſtly eſteemed a Divine Bleſſing, would prove a Curſe; for the Support and Encouragement

couragement of which, Superfluities may be procured; when our Circumſtances will not admit of ſuch a Profuſion, or it may be prejudicial and injurious to Friends or Relations, or hurtful to Self, it then becomes criminal, and is the Practice deſerving of Cenſure.

The eleventh Complaint is, *that they are paſſionately fond of French Airs and the French Taſte; that they eat, they drink, they dreſs, they ſpeak, they viſit, they ſalute after the French Manner; that our Country Manufactures are no longer agreeable, than as they imitate the Modes of that Nation; that not only their Sons and Daughters are to have their Education amongſt them, but even their Phillis's and Chloe's * are not the Things, unleſs they were born there, or of French Extraction, or have been brought up under a French Maſter.* The Complaint is, indeed, juſt. It is too evident, that Britiſh Simplicity and Modeſty have been exchanged for French Foppery and Levity. But is the other Sex leſs fond of theſe Things? Are there not frenchified Gentlemen, as well as Ladies? Take a Turn into the Mall, and you will meet with as many Apes as Butterflies. Both Sexes are ſo ſtrangely metamorphoſed, that one

* Names of Lap-dogs.

one ſeems to be a Stranger in one's own Country. If the one have their French Milliners and Tire Women, the other have their French Barbers and Taylors: If Mademoiſelle is to dreſs the Lady, Monſieur is to finiſh the Gentleman: If ſtrong Waters are imported for the one, rich Wines, &c. are imported for the other: Both have their dreſſing Tables, their Paints, their Waſhes, their Nippers, &c. There ſeems to be ſo little of the Engliſh about them, that if it was not for the Language, you would take them for Foreigners.

Both Sexes have too much followed the Effeminacies of the French. Where Circumſtances will admit, nay even beyond Circumſtances, the Faſhion prevails; from the Lady of Diſtinction to the meaneſt Servant of the Kitchen. In many Families, it is hard to diſtinguiſh, the Miſtreſs from the Maid. Their Wages, it is well known, will not make that Appearance; and from whence the Support comes, has been ſeverely felt by many. But we may rather wiſh for, than expect a Change in the lower Claſs, unleſs the great firſt ſet the Example; for Mankind have, in all Ages, been fond of imitating their Superiors. However, whether French Faſhions

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are laid aſide or not, the fair Sex cannot be juſtly cenſured for following them, ſince the Men are equally blameable.

The laſt general Complaint is, *that they have been, in all Ages, and ſtill are, the Cauſe of much Evil; many tragical Events are recorded in ancient Hiſtory, occaſioned by their Luſt, Pride, or Vanity; modern Times have alſo experienced their Power and Influence; in private Families, as well as in States and Empires, they have been felt.*—I ſhall not here recriminate, and prove from Hiſtory, ancient and modern, that they have been the Cauſe of more good than Evil: But allowing the Complaint to be juſt, Would you have the Sex to be extinct? For none other Remedy can be applied. The Situation of Adam will acquaint you, how comfortleſs and diſconſolate your Situation would be, if the Requeſt was granted. Your Philoſophy would be of little Uſe here, as you are made of the ſame Materials, and have the ſame natural Paſſions and Affections.

There have been ſome, who have expreſſed an Averſion to Females; but in many this has happened through Diſappointment or Spleen; in others from an auſtere and melancholy Diſpoſition, or a Fondneſs for a retired and recluſe Life; who have

have been equally averſe to the Converſation of Men as Women, and have not been leſs Enemies to Society than to human Nature: But even ſuch have found it not a little difficult to conquer a Paſſion, which the Supreme Being, for wiſe and excellent Purpoſes, implanted in us; and many of theſe Pretenders to Auſterity have been detected in unlawful Gratifications, and others in Actions, which Decency requires to be nameleſs.

With all their Evils it is better to retain them amongſt us, and be content to take them, as our Church directs, for better or worſe; ſince it would be the worſt Misfortune, that could happen to us, not to have them at all. If we are not wanting in Tenderneſs and Affection, we ſhall have no Reaſon to repent of the Choice; we ſhall live happy and comfortable; as otherwiſe we muſt be, and that juſtly, unhappy and miſerable.

If the Women of this, differ much from thoſe of the Patriarchal Age, are not ſuch fond Mothers, nor ſuch obedient Wives; if they are not ſuch, as they were in the early Days of Chriſtianity, remarkable for their Piety and Devotion; if they are not, according to the Apoſtles Rule, decent in Apparel and modeſt

modeſt in Behaviour, the Men cannot reproach, nor upbraid them; ſince theſe Things chiefly happen through their bad Example, or Approbation, or to pleaſe and gratify their Pride and Vanity. Beſides, have they leſs degenerated from the Ancients? A Reformation is wanting in both Sexes; it would be greatly for their Advantage and Intereſt to mend their Manners, and correct their Taſte: But the Men muſt lead the Way; and when they appear ſober and temperate, love their Pleaſures leſs, mind their Buſineſs more, ſpend their leiſure Hours with their Families at home, not be ſotting and trifling abroad, nor take delight in Fopperies, which it is rather the Misfortune, than the Fault of the Sex to be engaged in to pleaſe and humour us, I will venture to affirm, that there will be no Opportunity for complaining of their Gaiety, Vanity, and Extravagance.

I might now conſider the Complaints of the Fair; but as this would rather prevent, than procure a Reconciliation between the Parties, it is more prudent to drop them: And it would be in ſome Sort needleſs, ſince it is preſumed, that no one of our Sex could, with Decency and Propriety, attempt a Vindication, and it cannot be expected, that

that the Injured would undertake it. It is therefore hoped, that the one Party will ceaſe from Complaints, and the other from affording Matter of Complaint; that each will be more ready to correct, than find Faults; to forgive little Indiſcretions, which, as it is the Weakneſs of Human Nature to be frequently guilty of, ſhould rather kindle Compaſſion than Anger in our Breaſt; and to bear with, and love each other.

LETTERS

LETTERS

Lately received from the

DEAD.

LETTERS *lately received from the* DEAD.

IT may be expected that ſome Account ſhould be given, how I came by the following Letters; it being by ſome deemed abſurd to ſuppoſe a Communication between the Living and the Dead, or an Appearance of any from thence, when they are departed hence. What has brought this Opinion into Diſcredit, is the fiery Chariot, whoſe Riders Imagination has repreſented to be without Heads: But the Reverſe is true, if we may rely upon the Teſtimony of Perſons of Credit and Reputation, who have really ſeen it. Fairies we know are ſtill in being, and Ghoſts play in Country Church-yards as frequent as ever. This is confirmed by the Evidence of ſeveral

ſubſtantial Farmers *. I can produce many Inſtances of Parents, who have appeared to their Children; of Murders, which have been diſcovered by the Ghoſts of the Deceaſed ſeveral Years after they happened; of Uſurers, who after Death have given away large Sums of Money, which in their Life-time they had concealed under Ground; of Guardians, made honeſt by the Appearance of departed Souls; of Perſons, ſeen in England the ſame Day they were buried at Jamaica. A late noble Lord could not die, till he came over to England to acquaint his Lady, that he intended to depart the next Day at Paris. The Father of an eminent Divine now living, was viſited by a ſtrange Woman, who acquainted him, that ſhe was to be his Wife; it accordingly happened, and he knew her

* I once ridiculed the Opinion of Fairies, and believed with many others, that they were only the Creatures of Fancy: But having lately been in Company with a learned Farmer, and talking upon the Subject, he expreſſed a great Surpriſe at my Ignorance, and acquainted me, that they were the Phariſees, who excited the People againſt our Saviour; and for that Action are condemned to dance upon the Earth till the Day of Judgment. He quoted Scripture in Proof of his Aſſertion, whoſe Authority I could not deny, nor diſpute.

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to have been the ſame, who had appeared to him, by her Topknot. As Ghoſts then have been every where, and upon different Occaſions, the following Account cannot ſeem improbable.

Having Occaſion to go to Chelſea, upon my Return I called at the Abbey, and ſpent an Hour amongſt the Tombs in converſing with the Dead. As I was retiring, I heard a rumbling Noiſe behind me, and turning about, I ſaw a Hand extended: At firſt I was not a little ſurpriſed at ſuch a ſtrange Adventure, and doubted of the Reality of the Appearance; but approaching nearer, in order to be ſatisfied, the Hand diſappeared, and a Parcel laid at my Feet: When it was opened, I found in it, amongſt others, the following Letters, which, on the Cover, I was directed to communicate to the Public. What is improbable, or incredible in this Account? There are many Perſons, who are ready to atteſt, that they have both heard, and ſeen ſtrange Things in the Habitations of the Dead: For what Purpoſes thoſe Appearances were made, are not known; they being terrified at what they ſaw and heard, had not Courage and Reſolution to wait the Event. That the following Letters are genuine, will appear

from the Matter contained in them; which could not have been known or invented here, as it muſt be acknowledged, that in Regard of particular Tranſactions in the other World, we muſt be abſolute Strangers.

LETTER I.

From a PAPIST *to a* PROTESTANT.

IN the other World we form our Judgment of Things from Appearances; we have neither Time nor Ability to examine into their ſeveral Relations and Connections. We are apt to be miſled by Prejudice, and to look upon every Thing to be right and good, which we would have ſo to be. It frequently happens, that we offend in that, which in others we have condemned. From the Reformation to this preſent Time you have treated us Catholicks, as a credulous and ſuperſtitious People. The Infallibility of his Holineſs has been long the Subject of Mirth and Ridicule. Is Mother Church leſs infallible? You have indeed reformed and rectified many Errors and Abuſes; but you find it for your Intereſt,

as

as well as the See of Rome for her's, not to give up an abſolute Authority. You can never make Men embrace and receive human Appointments and Deciſions in religious Matters, unleſs they have a Ray of Divinity, ſupported by the Civil Power; for Men are ſo obſtinate, ſo ignorant, or ſo carnal, that they cannot underſtand or credit this Spiritual Claim, unleſs they are under Apprehenſions, or in Danger of ſuffering ſomething diſagreeable from rejecting or oppoſing it. The Plea for introducing Infallibility into our Church was very plauſible, and the Doctrine itſelf ſeemed to have been neceſſary, to prevent or put a Stop to Hereſies and Schiſms amongſt Chriſtians. But you well know, that it became the Sanction to all the Errors, Abuſes and Corruptions, that have prevailed amongſt the Catholicks. Do you imagine that the Infallibility of your Church is more infallible than the Church of Rome? That all the Injunctions of the one are right, of the other wrong? Both ſhelter themſelves under the Authority of Scripture; but are they willing to ſubmit to its Deciſion? Is it not plainly repugnant to any ſuch Opinion? Do not many treat it with Contempt both in their Writings and Converſation? Are not others

far from believing, though for ſecular Views they admit, all that the Church has required to be received? And ſo long as ſhe has divine Adoration offered to her, there will neither be Union amongſt Proteſtants, nor Reformation amongſt Catholicks. Let human Appointments have Weight, when directed by a Spirit of Moderation; when they do not encourage nor occaſion Diviſions, and Men are not condemned for Hereticks and Schiſmaticks, if they do not think every thing ſo appointed to be agreeable to, and conſiſtent with, the plain and ſimple Declarations of Scripture. Such Men meet with a better Treatment in this, than they commonly do in the other World. I know, that you are not deficient in Arguments to ſupport the Injunctions of your Church, nor are Defences wanting in Favour of the See of Rome: I know, that you find it not difficult to prove them weak and inconcluſive. And are not yours ſo thought by a great Number of Proteſtants? The Cuſtom of equalling human with divine Authority, has been the Plague and Scourge of Chriſtendom, ever ſince Chriſtianity was protected by, and incorporated with, the Civil Power; and in all Probability will continue to prevent Peace and Harmony

mony amongſt Chriſtians, until the final Diſſolution of all Things. Believe me, Sir, that Popes are not the only Men here condemned for Folly and Preſumption in pretending to Infallibility: Some of your Proteſtants are in the ſame Condemnation. You would be ſurpriſed to ſee, how familiarly they converſe, who, when living, reviled, abuſed, and cenſured each other. They are conſcious to themſelves, that they exacted an implicit Obedience with little Reaſon and great Severity. The Rulers of both Churches would do well to conſider the Prejudice done to Religion by this arbitrary Proceeding, and not be ſo much conceited of their own Wiſdom and Learning, as to forget Human Defects and Imperfections; for they will be found to have been not only fallible, but extremely weak and ridiculous: And will go near to ſuffer for Folly and Inhumanity in this World, for what with you is wrongly termed, pure Love and Zeal for Religion.

From your affectionate Friend,

A. P.

LETTER II.

From a TORY *to a* WHIG.

YOU know that I was a zealous Friend of the Church, and very active upon all Occaſions againſt the Miniſtry; though I could give no Reaſon, why I loved the one, or hated the other, excepting this, that I believed the former to be always in the right, and the latter to be always in the wrong. Theſe Principles I found it for my Intereſt to encourage, and others as readily imbibed them, led on by the ſame Motive, Weakneſs, or Malice; for Raillery and Declamation are Things well pleaſing to Men of little Minds, who are always prejudiced againſt ſuperior Merit and Power. Though your Conduct is the reverſe, yet you are not leſs ridiculous and credulous. You are as laviſh in Commendation, as I was in Cenſure; you approve, and I condemned every thing; I thought that they could do nothing right, you that they can do nothing wrong; I therefore oppoſed, and you conſent to all their Meaſures; in ſo doing we thought to diſtinguiſh ourſelves as the Friends

Friends of the Public. I, and ſeveral others of your Party, never imagined, that we ſhould be treated as its Enemies. We were informed, that we profeſſed to ſerve the Public, but intended only to ſerve ourſelves; that ſome flattered, and others exclaimed againſt Men in Power, becauſe the former courted, and the latter envied their Honours; that both would have been well pleaſed, and only wanted to have been in the ſame Situation. I now conſider Things in a different Light; that Miniſters can no more foreſee future Events, than myſelf; that they are oftentimes obliged to act from the Repreſentations of others, and cannot be acquainted with all the particular Circumſtances of Things; that as it is their Buſineſs to procure the beſt, ſo is it the Buſineſs of the oppoſite Party to publiſh the worſt Intelligence: And that thoſe, whom they make Choice of for that Purpoſe, do not always, either from Ignorance or Impoſition, communicate the Truth. Their Miſtakes therefore are oftentimes to be reckoned rather a Misfortune than a Fault; and that they are not always ſucceſsful, (which no one can be) may be more owing to the Miſconduct of others than their own. As Men, they have their Weakneſs, and cannot

not no more than others be without their Foibles. The one Party ſhould only oppoſe them in what is bad, the other only encourage them in what is good; not blaming them for Accidents, which they could not foreſee; and if foreſeen, they might not have been able to have prevented. This, Sir, will be of real Service to your Country: But the Riots and Quarrels, the Diſſentions and Animoſities, which the contrary Behaviour occaſions, and which yield no longer Satisfaction than whilſt Company is preſent and Wine inflames, is ſacrificing the Good of your Country for a Bottle, and laying up in Store eternal Sorrows for yourſelf. What future Calamities are now providing for thoſe, whom you are training up in Party Principles! Conſider, what Injuſtice has been done to Merit, what Injuries countenanced, what Violence committed, what Offences overlooked, and what Villainies excuſed by the Spirit of Party. How have Slander, Calumny and Reproach, how have Oaths, Perjuries, Drunkenneſs, Bribery and Corruption prevailed and been authoriſed by it! How many Perſons of the moſt infamous Characters, remarkable only for their Intemperance and Debauchery, have not only been eſteemed and careſſed,

reſſed, but repreſented as Men of a fair and unblemiſhed Reputation! And the only claim to ſuch extraordinary Favour was the being of a Party. This is thought with you and your Opponents to be a reaſonable and ſufficient Excuſe for all the Vices and Follies, which you or they may have committed: But you will be much miſtaken, when you come here. Many eminent and zealous Tories and Whigs, who, in the other World, were reputed wiſe, honeſt, ſincere, and loyal, are condemned to ſuffer in this as Fools, Knaves, Sycophants and Traitors. What you enjoy, I once experienced; what I endure, you cannot know, and may you never feel. You have Prudence and Diſcretion; the proper Uſe of them will prevent your ſuffering the Miſeries of your old Adverſary,

A TORY.

LETTER

LETTER III.

To a BLOOD.

YOU cannot imagine how ſtrangely my Condition is altered, ſince I left the other World. There was Mirth and Humour, with rare and delicate Fare: But thoſe Halcyon Days are no more. Dulneſs and Sorrow have ſucceeded. For thoſe few momentary Joys I am to ſuffer, I fear, an Eternity of Pain. I, who was once Company for a Lord, am regiſtered amongſt the Fellowſhip Porters; for you muſt underſtand, that Perſons guilty of the ſame Vices are in this Place put together, of whatever State and Condition they be. To ſin like a Gentleman, or with Decency, is allowed to be no Excuſe for the Crime, and claims no Favour, though it may keep up a tolerable Reputation with you. French Claret and Old Hock are upon a Level with Porter and Geneva. To have been merry with his Grace at the King's Arms, meets with no better Treatment, than if I had got drunk with his Groom at the Cellar. As I had a good Pipe, was a little verſed in Politics, and

and full of pleaſant Stories, I was always eſteemed the agreeable Companion. Theſe Qualifications introduced me into a Variety of Company: And I now find, that it was more to pleaſe themſelves than me, that I was ſo much courted and careſſed. As I always paid my Part, which a Trifle did not diſcharge, and to keep Company with Perſons greatly ſuperior to me in Birth and Fortune, I was forced at laſt to ſell the Family Eſtate; which ſupported me a few Months, and then I expired, leaving this Character behind me, that I had lived a merry Life, though a ſhort one. The Reflection upon what is paſt adminiſters no Conſolation, but much Sorrow in this diſmal Place. My midnight Frolicks and Debaucheries, breaking the Lamps, knocking down the Watch, bullying my Landlady, talking bawdy to her Daughter, continual Drinking, Swearing, Gaming, Wenching and Rioting, with all the other Accompliſhments neceſſary to conſtitute the true Character of a modern Hero, have only ſerved to make me completely miſerable. Several of your merry Fellows are in the ſame ſad Condition. And I find, as the Humour increaſes by forming themſelves into Societies, that we are likely to have many more Bloods, Bucks,

and

and jovial Fellows amongſt us. As we are here known to be rank Cowards (though in the other World we looked upon ourſelves as Bravo's) not having dared to encounter with any, but whom we knew to have been incapable either of injuring us or defending themſelves, nor ever with ſuch but in the Dark and by Surpriſe; we were ordered to the loweſt Place in Sots Hole, to be hooted at and buffeted by thoſe terrible Fellows, called Carmen, Porters, and Draymen; whom, when living, we always carefully avoided, and dreaded an Engagement with: For, though fond of drubing others, we were horribly afraid of being drubed ourſelves. We petitioned to have the Sentence reverſed, but to no Purpoſe. I do aſſure you, that the Bloods look very cool upon the Matter, and appear very ſullen and diſpirited. I here met with three young Fellows of good Repute in your World, who acquainted me, that they had killed themſelves in endeavouring to live. Upon explaining themſelves, it appeared, that by keeping much Company and hard Drinking, to procure a greater Trade, they had drank themſelves into Fevers, Conſumptions, &c. and expired with this Satisfaction, that they had ſpent much, got little,

ſaved

ſaved leſs, made their Families unhappy, and themſelves miſerable. Turning from theſe, I met with ſome old Soakers, who were Members of ſeveral Clubs, Lodges, Societies, &c. who are condemned for defrauding their Creditors, and expoſing their Families to Want and Penury at home, to ſupport this good Fellowſhip, as they termed it, abroad. Thoſe Meetings which are ſuppoſed to be conſtituted for agreeable Converſation and innocent Indulgence, are treated here as tending to none other End, than the comfortable Support of Vintners and Publicans, who by theſe Inſtitutions become rich, at the Expence of the Health and Fortune of the Gueſts, and the Ruin and Deſtruction of their ſeveral Families. Leaving theſe Sots, I ſaw others, who had fed well at Elections and public Meetings. As the Entertainments coſt nothing, they thought it to have been no Crime to have made free: But the Plea was found inſufficient, as they had ſacrificed their Conſcience to their Belly. There were other Souls, who attempted to excuſe themſelves, in ſaying, that they had only made merry with a Friend, a Tenant, at a Wedding or Chriſtning. They were told, that it was an odd Way of expreſſing Joy, or returning

Thanks

Thanks for the Favours of Providence, by acting the Part of a Brute. Theſe are not ſo criminal; but they are not without their Sufferings. If, then, you will be merry, be wiſe; for if you play the Fool in the other World, be aſſured that you will ſuffer for it in this.

From your Brother BLOOD.

LETTER IV.

To a Frenchified ENGLISH LADY.

MY Death, you know, was occaſioned by Grief for the Loſs of that ſweet pretty Creature Chloe *. I came here in Company with Lord Meager, who ſickened at an Entertainment upon the Sight of roaſt Beef, and Lady Eve, who got cold at a Maſquerade; Sir Harry Tinſel, who went off in an Apoplectic Fit upon having his French Lace ſeized at Dover, and Madam Flounce by a Chagrin, occaſioned by the Narrowneſs of her Hoop-petticoat; Miſs Prattle, who talked herſelf to Death, and Mrs. Boniface, who expired in her Cloſet by drinking too freely of her Cordial Waters; Miſs Roſy

* A favourite Lap-dog.

Roſy and Lady Baldpate, who ſwooned away upon the Diſcovery of the falſe Hair and coloured Cheeks; Lord Fanciful, who died of the Megrims, and Lady Swell, who burſt upon the Sight of a Perſon better dreſſed than herſelf; Tom Merryweather, who was ſlain by the Hip, and Lady Slander by the untimely Birth of a Natural, with 'Squire Good-Fellow and his Chaplain who had been too free with brown Nappy: There were alſo Maſter Trim the Hair-Cutter, Miſs Modiſh the French Milliner, Mrs. Shape the Mantua-maker, and Mr. Prettyman the Mercer. Theſe, my dear Creature, were our old Acquaintance, and all in high Life. You cannot imagine, how exceedingly our Spirits were fluttered, when we came to this filthy Place. Roſe-water, Hartſhorn and Cordials were called for, but in vain. Our preſent Puniſhment is monſtrous; for we are obliged to appear in a Character, which we always loathed and deſpiſed, *plain Engliſh:* And what is worſe, thoſe ill-bred, unpolite, unfaſhionable Creatures, called Engliſhmen, are to be our ſole Companions. You cannot think how queer we look, and how uncomfortably we live. Miſs Modiſh the French Milliner, whilſt we had her Company, was ſome Alleviation of

the Sorrows we endure; but we were all ſo exceſſively fond of her, that the Secret was ſoon known, and ſhe was taken from us. We are now doomed for ever to aſſociate with the Brutes, and, moſt barbarous and inhuman, to converſe with each other in our Mother Tongue. What I adviſe you to do, is to diſcharge your French Maſter and Servants; away with their Perfumes, Waſhes, Paints, &c. You may appear to an Advantage in the other World by following their Modes; but you may credit me, you will make a moſt ridiculous Figure in this. Our Politeneſs and Taſte are termed Foppery and Folly; and what is intolerable, as we paſs along, we are laughed at and treated with Contempt by the very Perſons, whom we were ſo fond and deſirous of imitating. They tell us, that their Trinkets and Faſhions were invented, not to pleaſe us, but enrich themſelves; that they knew our Weakneſs, and humoured it; and with their Manners they communicated their Vices: So that they ſpoiled us of our Virtue and Underſtanding, as well as our Fortunes. Our Lords ſhook their Heads, and the Ladies appeared much dejected. We are all heartily ſorry for our Miſdoings: And grievous as our Sufferings are, we

ſhould,

ſhould, with Content, bear them, if we could be permitted to return again and reviſit your World for a few Months, to revenge theſe Inſults of French Barbers, Tire-Women, Valets, &c. If Lady ſuch a one knew what we ſuffer, ſhe would lay aſide her new Head Dreſs, nor would her Grace want a Frenchman to adjuſt her Tucker; Mrs. Cit would ſoon exchange her Sack for the long Tail, and Country Dick ſell his ſhort Bob for his long Hair; Sir Simon would give up his Bag for the full Bottom, and the pinched Cock would grow up to the broad Brim; Lord Guzzle would leave his Claret for Burgundy *; and Jack Taper quit his Soup and his Sallad for the Engliſh Capon and Surloin: In ſhort, there would be a general Return to the ancient Ruſticity and Simplicity, as it is termed, of Britiſh Manners, ſo terrible to that Nation; which at preſent they are not apprehenſive of, and hope, by their Effeminacies and Fopperies, to vitiate your Taſte, corrupt your Morals, weaken your Courage, impair your Underſtanding, and to conquer you by their Foibles, rather than by their Valour. As your Lord is in the M——y, you would do well to lay this

* Porter ſo called.

Letter before him: But whether it gains Credit or not, you may be aſſured, that by a Return to the Britiſh Taſte, the Ladies would appear to a much greater Advantage, ſince their Beauty is oftentimes concealed under, or deformed by the French Modes; and Sir John Engliſh ſays, that it would be of conſiderable Benefit to Trade, encourage Induſtry, and promote your home Manufactories. From yours, &c.

A Frenchified Engliſh Lady reformed.

P. S. I forgot to tell you, that we had ſome Cits amongſt us, whoſe aukward Imitation of the Beau Monde afforded ſome Diverſion, and occaſioned a loud Laugh. It proved of ſingular Service to them; for they immediately returned to their old conſtitutional Gravity.

LETTER

LETTER V.

From a SON *to his* FATHER.

I WAS juſt entering into Life, when I was ſuddenly taken out of it. You ſaw ſomething in me, that made you conceive favourable Hopes, that I ſhould one Day be a great Man, and you promiſed to yourſelf much Satisfaction. This was not the only Indearment; my filial Reſpect and Obedience made me ſtill more dear to you. But why ſhould you be inconſolable for one, who rejoices that he has left not you, but the World ſo ſoon? This early Death has made me happy; a longer Life might have made me miſerable. You had filled my Mind with virtuous Sentiments; and whilſt with you, inſtructed by your Precepts, and actuated by your Example, I was, indeed, virtuous and good: But how long ſhould I have ſo continued, when removed from your Preſence and Influence? The Ways of Folly ſeem pleaſant and agreeable: And as they are more adapted to the Temper and Diſpoſition of Youth, than the ſevere, but wholeſome, Rules of Virtue, it is no won-

der, that ſo many tread the Paths, which they ought to ſhun. Whilſt under your Government I had no Solicitation to tranſgreſs. Had my Virtue been tried, Reſolutions to preſerve it might have failed. Is it not better, then, that you ſhould mourn and grieve a few Years, than that I ſhould have hazarded the Loſs of eternal Joys, to give you a little tranſient momentary Pleaſure? How often have I heard you diſcourſe concerning Death as Man's beſt Friend, as it diſſipates all Sorrow, and puts an End to all the Miſeries of Life, from which the greateſt and wealthieſt cannot be exempt. It is, I allow, natural to weep for an only Child; it would be inhuman not to do it: But Reaſon, when the firſt Grief is over, muſt applaud the Change. A Change from Woe to Joy; for neither Ills nor Diſeaſe, Malice nor Envy diſturb the Dead. Follow then, Sir, the Advice, which you have often and tenderly adminiſtered to the Diſconſolate. Conſider, that the Honour, to which my Talents might have raiſed me, would have excited the Envy of many, the Hatred of others, and the Eſteem of few. If you knew what I enjoy, you could not be ſo uneaſy at your Loſs. You had, indeed, but one Child; and had Reaſon to expect,

expect, that I ſhould have proved a Bleſſing. And ſhould it not afford you Comfort, when you reflect, that I did not live to be a Curſe and a Diſgrace to your Name? I might not have erred from the Paths, which, from my Infancy, I had been accuſtomed to walk in: But as your Acquaintance with Hiſtory and Mankind informs you, that the Friends of Virtue have become its Enemies, you muſt receive ſome Conſolation yourſelf, and think it more happy for me, that I did not live to make the Experiment. You will now leave the World with Satisfaction, inaſmuch as all your Fears and Cares for your darling Offspring are over; who, had he not obſerved your Inſtructions, would have brought down your grey Hairs with Sorrow to the Grave. I am gone but a little Time before you. The Decay of Nature and the Infirmities of old Age, will quickly bring you to this Place of Reſt, where we ſhall ever remain together, never more to part. Think ever think upon this, my Parents, and grieve no more. You are only deprived of me a few Years, to enjoy my Company to all Eternity. If it had been otherwiſe, you might have been happy without me. It is an Happineſs to have Children; it is a divine Bleſſing to have

them good: And to loſe them, whilſt they are good, is a moſt ſingular Happineſs and Bleſſing; for Parents know not what future Calamities, Misfortunes and Diſtreſſes, are provided for them. It ſhould be no real Concern to the Parent, how ſhort they live; ſince he who has lived well, if he dies young, has lived long enough; and thoſe who ſo live, muſt be happy: Which is the Preſent Condition of

From Paradiſe. Your dutiful and affectionate Son,

S. S.

LETTER VI.

To an HONEST MAN.

IT is a juſt Obſervation, and Experience has confirmed it, that Honeſty is the direct Road to Poverty. To conform to the Times, and comply with the Tempers and Humours of Men, is the ſureſt Way to be rich. The Practice is ſo common, that the Diſagreeableneſs and Vicioufneſs of it are worn off. Not only the Vulgar, whoſe

whoſe Ignorance may be admitted as an Excuſe for the Folly, follow it; but Men, in other Matters remarkable for their Prudence and Diſcretion, find it neceſſary and expedient to conform to it, if they intend to ſerve themſelves or their Acquaintance. It frequently happens, in oppoſing Injuſtice, or not patiently ſubmitting to Oppreſſion, a Man only acquires Poverty in Reverſion, or reduces himſelf to Beggary. As Poverty is accounted an Evil by ſome, and a Diſgrace by others; as ſome covet Wealth and Power for the Indulgence of Self, and others for the Benefit and Service of Relations and Friends; as the Wants and Neceſſities of Life are many, and require a continual Supply; hence it is, to avoid the firſt, to procure the ſecond, and relieve the third, ſo little of true public Spirit and common Honeſty appear in your World: And Men are not aſhamed to court the Eſteem and Favour of thoſe, even publickly applaud and commend, whom they privately laugh at and deſpiſe. Hence it is, that Men are more anxious to be great than good: And Superiority is founded not on Virtue and Piety, but Title and Fortune. They well know, that thoſe Things make them to be feared or reverenced; few have Reſolution

and

and Spirit to contemn their Diſpleaſure, or ſlight their Intereſt; not to fear their Frowns, nor court their Smiles. Flattery and Obſequiouſneſs procure many Friends; Sincerity and Freedom of Speech many Enemies. The Rich and Great chuſe to have their Faults paſſed over in Silence. The Man who refuſes to ſubmit to their grievous Impoſitions, treats them with none other Reſpect than their Virtues not their Riches claim, and dares to tell them of their Faults, is ſure to ſmart for it. Knaves count him a Madman, others pity his Weakneſs, ſome treat him as a Fool for not practiſing the common Art of living well; and even thoſe who commend his Conduct, will not aſſiſt the Man. It is hard to ſuffer for what merits Reward, and to be reproached and inſulted for what deſerves the public Praiſe and Applauſe. Many can be ſuperior to the Misfortunes and Accidents of Life; but Calumnies and Indignities, undeſerved, affect the Soul of Man. When conſcious of Innocence, to have our Virtues deemed Vices, requires an uncommon Greatneſs of Soul to ſupport the injurious Treatment. Few are able to withſtand a public Ridicule; many, therefore, from Fear of Shame, others from a Diſlike of Singularity,

rity, and ſome from a Dread of Want, have proved wavering and inconſtant. Your Character has hitherto been the Reverſe. Still perſiſt in what you have adhered to from your firſt Appearance in Life, not to do any thing that was baſe, nor ſubmit to any thing that was mean. Let not the Afflictions which you may ſuffer frighten you, nor the Contempt to which you may be expoſed, diſcountenance nor diſcourage you. You muſt not expect to be rich or great. You will have many Difficulties in Life to encounter with; they will not be leſs, they may be greater than you now labour under. If you cannot ſupport Affliction, you muſt ſink under the Weight of it; a few Years will put a Period to all your Sorrows. The Times, it has been commonly ſaid, will not admit of plain Truth; nor is it fit that it ſhould at all Times be ſpoken: But if Truth was at all Times to be ſpoken, Men would be as much aſhamed to commit Folly, as they now ſeem to be above the Cenſure of it; they would avoid being wicked, and covet to be good. But how can Virtue appear lovely and amiable, or Vice odious and deteſtable, when Men, through Fear of Diſpleaſure or the Sake of Intereſt, beſtow Encomiums, where they

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are not due. Though Diſtreſs may be your Portion in the other World, be not caſt down nor dejected; ſince you may be aſſured, that in this you will be amply recompenſed. Reading and Experience convince you, that there are but few Things valuable in this Life. He ſeems to be the wiſeſt and happieſt Man, who looks upon it with Indifference, and only procures what may be neceſſary and convenient, rather than what is pleaſant and agreeable; ſince that is not always to be purchaſed with Innocence, too frequently at the Expence of Conſcience in Reverſion. Go on on as you have begun, and you need not doubt of Happineſs hereafter.

Yours, &c.

From Paradiſe,

W. P.

LETTER

LETTER VII.

To an INFIDEL.

THE Bible, that moſt ſacred Repoſitory of Nonſenſe, as we termed it, and the credulous Fools who believed it, always afforded Matter for an hearty Laugh. The Prophecies contained in it we judged to have been the Contrivances of cunning and artful Knaves, and the Miracles recorded to have as little of true Divinity, as the Perſian Fables or Tales of the Fairies: And the whole to have been the Invention of Enthuſiaſts; whoſe Succeſſors, the Gentlemen of the black Gown, propagate and keep up the Solemnity of the Deluſion, not for the Sake of Religion, or from any great Opinion of its Authority, but a Regard to the Profits ariſing from it, and the Power of governing and directing the Conſciences of Men. Notwithſtanding all that Wit, Parts, and Learning could do, to make things Holy as ridiculous, as they were to us contemptible; and to ſhew that in all the different Religions, and various Sects and Parties

ties proceeding from them, from the firſt Age of their civil Eſtabliſhment to this preſent Time, the End propoſed was one and the ſame, the Acquiſition of Wealth and Power; I am now convinced that the Authority once ridiculed, is moſt ſacred. You may believe the Dead, for they can have no Motive to deceive or impoſe upon you. At your ſober Intervals you was wont to ſay, that though Religion had ſtrong Appearances of Falſhood and Impoſture, it might be true. You always acted indeed, as if you believed it to be falſe: But you ſhould act in ſuch a Manner, that whether Religion proves true or falſe, your Prudence need not be impeached, nor your future Happineſs indangered. What is poſſible may be; that it will not, you cannot now know; but you have Time, and as you do not want for Diſcretion in Matters of leſs Moment, I hope, that you will endeavour to provide againſt the worſt Event. For Fear of Superſtition I fell into the ſame Error with you, and gave myſelf up to Incredulity. This would have been leſs criminal, if when I ridiculed Religion, I had adhered to the Practice of her Laws, which I acknowledged to have been wiſe, juſt, and good. The Love of Pleaſure being inconſiſtent

conſiſtent with the Belief of Religion, I could not gratify the one, unleſs I reſigned up the other. It did not ſuit with my Temper and Conſtitution to ſubmit to any Reſtraint, though uſeful and neceſſary; I therefore became indifferent towards Religion; and examined the Proofs offered in Support of its Evidence with leſs Care, Serioufneſs and Attention, than the Objections raiſed againſt it: And finding that there was no Toleration for Vice, I was eaſily wrought upon to condemn, what condemned me, according to our favourite Maxim, that if Religion was againſt us, we were to be againſt Religion. We looked upon ourſelves as reaſonable clever Fellows in the other World, and we outwardly appeared to be of a pleaſant and chearful Temper; but many of your old Acquaintance are now ſenſible, that it was meer Affectation, and confeſs that in the Abſence of Company they had ſome ſecret fore-bodings of what they ſuffer; that Solitude produced many unpleaſant Reflections, and though when abroad they could laugh at and ridicule the Chriſtian Notion of a future State of Reward and Puniſhment, yet, alone, they wiſhed to enjoy the one, and dreaded the Severity of the other. Our Reaſon ſerved

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to make ourſelves obſtinate, to deceive the weak and ignorant, and to ſupport and eſtabliſh Vice and Immorality upon a pretended Principle of Virtue and Goodneſs. We pleaded Reaſon as an Excuſe for our Unbelief, but the Plea was inſufficient; for we were informed, that there would have been no Exception againſt Religion, if our Practice had not been inconſiſtent with it; that no honeſt Man could be an Enemy, to what is calculated to promote and encourage all that is truly great and good, and to diſcountenance every thing baſe and wicked; that allowing the Evidence to be dubious and uncertain, the Man who profeſſed himſelf to be the ſincere Friend of Virtue would incline to that Side, which was moſt likely to promote and advance her Cauſe; that if it had no better Authority than human, yet as Members of Society we were obliged to receive and treat it with Decency and Reſpect; and if it had been falſe, a Regard for the Welfare and Intereſt of Mankind ſhould have inclined us, rather to have concealed than publiſhed the Falſhood, as a Concealment would prevent many Exceſſes, and keep ſome ſober, who are rather virtuous through Fear than Choice: But a Publication would open a Door

Door to Licenciouſneſs, and be not leſs a private than publick Calamity. We were all ſo well ſatisfied of theſe Truths, that we ſneaked away without offering any Reply; and we ſtand condemned, not for uſing, but abuſing human Liberty, not only for employing Reaſon to ſupport and propagate Error in Oppoſition to Truth, but to defend and excuſe our Vices. Theſe Things may be lightly eſteemed of by you; but from Experience I do aſſure you, that they will prove of ſerious Conſequence. I am now ſatisfied, that Credulity is preferable to Infidelity, becauſe there is the leaſt Hazard in it. It is reaſonable to ſuppoſe, that he who has Reſpect to the Honour of God, the Good of Man, and ſelf Government, if he exiſts in another State, ſhould rather be rewarded than puniſhed: But the Infidel, whoſe Character is the Reverſe, muſt look for and expect, not a Reward, but Puniſhment. The Difference, Sir, is this, that the one muſt be happy, if he ſhould exiſt hereafter, and cannot be miſerable, if he does not: But the Happineſs of the other conſiſts in a Non-Exiſtence, if otherwiſe he muſt be miſerable. You have Time to prevent the latter and enjoy the

former. If you perſiſt in the old Way, you will undoubtedly ſuffer.

From your's &c.

A RATIONALIST.

LETTER VIII.

To a formal CHRISTIAN.

WHEN living, no one was more regular and punctual in their Attendance at Church, where I offered up my Devotions with great Appearance of Piety and Sanctity. Like good King David, and the captive Prophet, I was frequent at Prayer, and looked upon thoſe who did not ſo attend, to have been very wicked and ungodly. From this Behaviour I judged myſelf to have been a good Man and a good Chriſtian, and thought it would have merited ſome Reward; but in this I have been deceived, as I had been in the Nature of true Devotion. I was told, that Buſineſs was no more to be neglected than Religion; that had I been leſs devout, I ſhould have been more honeſt; that to maintain a Shew of Piety, I had expoſed my Family to Want;

Want; and by a vain and idle Repetition of Prayers I had been Deaf to the Demands of my Creditors. Thus by a too close Attention to the Words of the Apostle, *to pray always*, I had forgot two other Precepts of equal Importance and Obligation, *to owe no Man any Thing*, and *to provide for my own Houshold*. These Things I ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone; for there can be no true Piety towards God, which is accompanied with Injustice to Man. As I had prayed too much, so there are others here, who have prayed too little; as I had paid a too great Regard to Spirituals, so they to Temporals. From an extraordinary Attention to Business they had neglected their Devotions. Wealth and Power had so wholly engrossed their Affections, that Religion was only observed at Intervals, out of Decency, and with the View of Interest, as something may be acquired from the meer Reputation of Goodness without the Practice. We have also amongst us some Protestant Hermits; who, when in the other World, contemned and despised the Things in it. They hated Wealth and Grandeur, and railed at the Pleasures of Life, because they could not procure, nor enjoy them; and were

content with an hard Subſiſtence, becauſe Poverty or Inability confined them to it. They were informed, that their Contempt of the World was not founded on Judgment and Experience, but was the Effect of Conſtitution or Fortune; that they had either no Reliſh for, or could not purchaſe the Enjoyments of it; that they declaimed againſt the Pleaſures of it, becauſe through Folly, or Imprudence, or a too free Indulgence, they had deprived themſelves of them; that the true Contempt of the World did not conſiſt in giving up the Comforts of it, (for it was both Nature and Duty to procure what may be productive of Happineſs, and prevent Sorrow and Miſery) but in doing nothing that was mean, baſe or wicked to obtain them, and in ſacrificing them, and even Life itſelf, rather than do an Injury to Virtue and Religion, by procuring them with Diſhoneſty, or enjoying them with Remorſe. This is the Behaviour, that gives ſome Merit to Poverty, and the contrary makes it infamous to be rich. Here are likewiſe ſome grave and ſolemn Chriſtians, full of Spleen and Melancholy; who, from a natural or an acquired Sourneſs of Temper, hated every Thing that was pleaſant, and looked upon it to be criminal

minal even to ſmile; to be chearful they accounted the Sign of a looſe Diſpoſition, and to frequent Places of Diverſion was to go to the Devil headlong. They were told, that they had given a very unfavourable and unjuſt Repreſentation of Religion; that Amuſements were neceſſary to refreſh the Mind and recreate the Body, and were only to be deemed criminal, when they vitiated the Morals, or hurt the Conſtitution; that thoſe who abſtained from ſuch Places, were not better Chriſtians than thoſe who frequented them, when the Effects mentioned did not follow; that Religion does not prohibit the Pleaſures of Senſe, though ſhe condemns an immoderate Gratification; that as the Deſign of it was to make us better Men, thoſe who were ſo, muſt be of a chearful not a gloomy Countenance; that if the former Appearance was not always to be accounted a Sign of internal Goodneſs, the latter was certainly the Repreſentation of a bad Temper, if not a wicked Heart; and proceeds rather from Conſtitution or a Conſciouſneſs of Guilt, than an abſolute Averſion to innocent Mirth and Humour; for Goodneſs is an Enemy to Dulneſs. How can the Man, whoſe Hands are pure from Sin, and whoſe

Paſſions with the Affections are governed by, and in Subordination to the Laws of Reaſon and Religion, be otherwiſe than of a joyous and pleaſant Countenance? Moroſeneſs, Peeviſhneſs, Melancholy and Lowneſs of Spirits, if they do not always, yet generally proceed from ſomething very oppoſite to and inconſiſtent with Religion. You find, Sir, from what I have written, that a Man may be always upon his Knees, and yet be no Chriſtian; that he may give up the Enjoyments of Life, without any future Benefit in Reverſion; that he may roar and exclaim againſt Diverſions, &c. without any Principle or Merit; that his pretended Sanctity is ſinful, his Auſterity fooliſh, and his Exclamations abſurd and ridiculous. Believe me, all theſe queer Fellows are likely to ſuffer here, for what in the other World they flattered themſelves, that they ſhould be rewarded. You have Time, if you have any Prudence and Senſe left, to prevent the Miſery in yourſelf: And, I hope, this ſeaſonable and friendly Advice will not be neglected.

Your's, &c.

G. W.

LETTER

LETTER IX.

To a METHODIST.

IN the other World I was one of your Sect. Before Converſion I was a moſt wicked Fellow. By a too free Indulgence of ſelf, my little Fortune was ſoon ſquandered away, and I was reduced to a bare Subſiſtence. In this Situation my paſt Follies, which had been the Cauſe of my Sufferings, came into my Mind. I was diſtreſſed and afflicted with Poverty and Guilt: And I knew not how to remedy the one, or remove the other. Reflection threw me into Melancholy. In a Fit of this kind I was adviſed to take a Turn to the Tabernacle; where the Subjects treated of were *ſpiritual Feelings*, *divine Illuminations*, and *Aſſurance of Salvation*. They were ſo artfully handled, and with ſuch ſeeming Piety and Sincerity, that they met with a too kind Reception. I entertained them, not becauſe they were true, but were at that Time very agreeable to my Condition; for I never enquired or examined into the Reaſonableneſs and Conſiſtency of the Doc-

trines with the ſacred Scriptures. To be aſſured of Salvation, when the Terrors of Guilt were upon me, was very comfortable. My Imagination being thoroughly heated, I ſoon embraced the Deluſion, and felt the ſaving Grace within me. I never thought, nor ſuſpected theſe Feelings to have been produced by Conceit, Fear, or Diſeaſe. The Doctrine of Aſſurance, when firſt heard, did, I confeſs, appear ſomewhat ſtrange; but I did not long ſtand out againſt it, becauſe I was informed, that if I was not aſſured of my Salvation, I might be of my Damnation; I therefore refuſed the Evil, as it was then thought, and choſe the Good. Hence I became vain, preſumptuous and ſecure; and from an Opinion, that I could do no wrong, being in a State of Perfection, I conſidered not, nor regarded the wrong which I did. Since I have been here, I have ſeen better into the Nature of Man; that he can no more ceaſe from Sin, than he can ceaſe to be; that his Virtue and Innocence are ſurrounded with many alluring and inviting Temptations, which frequently ſteal upon him in unguarded Moments, when leaſt ſuſpicious of Danger; that he is, and whilſt he continues to be mortal, cannot but be guilty of many Failings, Errors

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and Miſtakes, which are ſufficient to humble the lofty and aſpiring Thought, and to create an Opinion, that he is not good enough to go to Heaven, rather than make him confident, that he ſhall go thither. An Opinion which has great Danger in it; for Preſumption begets Security, Security Indolence, and Indolence is the Parent of Sin and Folly. I ſhould have been now happy, had I, when under the Conviction of paſt Follies, attended to the Scripture Doctrine of Repentance, regulated my Conduct by it and Reaſon, and not have relied upon an inſtantaneous Converſion, and I know not what ſecret and inviſible Workings and Operations of the Holy-Spirit upon me; which I find to have been the quickeſt, but not the ſafeſt Way of getting free from Vice. What now ſurpriſes me is, that I ſhould ever have adopted this Doctrine of Aſſurance, ſince our Apoſtles ſaid, and their Diſciples know, that after this Aſſurance received they may relapſe into Sin; be doubtful and even deſpair of their Salvation. The Cauſes why I think differently from what I formerly did, are the Coolneſs of my Head, the Return of Reaſon, and the Diſcharge of Melancholy. You often upbraid the Devil for reporting you to be Madmen,

Madmen, Enthuſiaſts, &c. You accuſe him of buffetting you, expoſing you to Temptations, and by his Tricks ſometimes deluding you into them; you charge him with checking and obſtructing the Progreſs of the good Work, and the falſe and ſcandalous Repreſentations given of your Perſons, Characters and Tenets. Believe me, from all this the Devil is quite clear and innocent; he only fears, leſt you ſhould be accounted mad in this World, and your Enthuſiaſm be rather an Object of Pity than Reſentment; he has a Feeling in your Feelings, an Aſſurance in your Aſſurances; your Enemies are his; he hates and deteſts the Doctrine of good Works not leſs than you; he has Faith in the Lord Jeſus, and acknowledges and agrees with you, that he cannot of himſelf do any good; he pronounces Damnation upon all thoſe, who differ from you, not having his true ſaving Faith, and heartily and ſincerely wiſhes that they were all damned, and that the Prieſts, thoſe falſe Prophets as you call them, who have been long at Enmity with him, had no more of Religion than you allow them to have. As he entirely agrees with you, and is willing to aſſiſt you in every Matter, he thinks that you have done him wrong,

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by asserting Morality to be the Child of the Devil; for no one can be a greater Enemy to it than himself; he has it in such Abhorrence, that he will not suffer one of its Practicers to be in H—ll; he was afraid, that a Doctrine which from the first Age of the World he had exploded and ridiculed, would never more after the Publication of Christianity have been treated with Contempt: But he is glad to hear, that you have once more enlightened the Ways of Darkness. You have accused him of being the Author of the Religion of Nature, and the Use of Reason in Matters of Revelation: So far from being the Author of one or the other, that he joins with you in crying down both as impious, monstrous, ridiculous and absurd. He wonders, that you can think him to be so much wanting to his Interest, as to have introduced Notions in direct Opposition to it. Implicit Faith and Obedience are his favourite Doctrines. He had more Subjects, when they were more generally received. The Reformation, he says, gave him a terrible Blow; he has ever since that Time been in Fear of Mortality: But now hopes through your kind Assistance to revive, and that Men will no more see the Folly and Weakness of Immorality and

Infidelity

Infidelity in the Study of Nature, nor the Beauty and Excellency, the Reasonableness and Expediency of Revealed Religion, by a candid and strict Enquiry into the End and Design of it; that Sectarists and Hereticks may daily increase, and Ignorance and Superstition once more prevail and triumph over Reason and Religion. Another Crime with which he is falsely charged, is creating a Despondency in the Minds of your Followers; so that those who have been regenerate, and were by the Holy Spirit assured of Salvation, have even despaired of it, and looked upon themselves as damned. He trusts, that you have accused him through Ignorance, and upon a better Enquiry you will acquit him; for such Behaviour would lessen the Number of the Inhabitants of this Place. To tell People that they are damned, would give them, he saith, an Opportunity of saving themselves. His Conduct is the Reverse, and he jointly labours with you in propagating the Doctrine of Assurance. He is very angry at your saying, that the Children of the World (meaning those who do not embrace your Opinions) are the genuine Offspring of the Devil. He positively asserts that they cannot be his Children; for he is a Spirit, and therefore

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his Children muſt be, like the Parent, of a ſpiritual Nature. He acknowledges the Charge of being the Deceiver of Mankind, but ſays, that the Complaint is unjuſt and improper from the Mouth of your Apoſtles. The Diabolical Poſſeſſions which have been ſo frequent amongſt our Brethren, he denies, having been deprived of this Power ever ſince the Appearance of Chriſt; he is content, however, to have the Notion propagated, though falſe; ſince it keeps up the Reputation of lying Wonders, which have proved of ſingular Service to him in deluding weak, ignorant and fooliſh Men. Thus much for Satan's Conduct towards you. I would adviſe you not to uſurp a Power, which ſolely belongs to the Deity, in boldly pretending to know the Secrets of Mens Hearts, and impiouſly pronouncing Damnation upon them; nor to truſt your Salvation to Opinions proceeding from an heated Imagination, or a crazy Conſtitution, but to the plain and ſimple Declarations of Scripture, which your Reaſon muſt approve to be excellent and juſt. To rely upon any Thing, but what is warranted and confirmed by Scripture and Reaſon, can yield no ſolid and laſting Foundation of Happineſs. Your Aſſurance is a kind of

Opiate,

Opiate, which for a Time diverts the Terrors of Guilt, but cannot totally remove the Pain. You may credit the Dead, who has learnt Conviction by Experience. When I began to ſee my Folly, had I attended the Service of the Church, which before I had entirely neglected, made the Satisfaction in my Power to thoſe, whom I had injured, practiſed the Duties which I had omitted, and forſaken the Vices which I had committed; I ſhould have had more of Humility and leſs of Pride, my Repentance would have had more of Sincerity and leſs of Conceit, and I ſhould have practiſed Virtue and Religion, not from Fear but Love. This would have been Satisfaction beyond all my former pretended inward Motions and Feelings of the Spirit of Jeſus and the Holy Spirit; to whom you aſcribe the Nonſenſe and Abſurdities, which you frequently utter, and the wild and ſtrange Attitudes which you appear in, when the Fit comes on, and the Vapours riſe. You groan, you ſigh, you ſmile, you rave; which different Behaviour ſeems not to have been unaptly repreſented by the two Figures on Bedlam Gates. If you take a Turn into the Hoſpital, you may there ſee yourſelves in living Characters, and in ſome of your own beloved Brethren.

Be

Be adviſed not to fancy nor reckon your-ſelves amongſt God's Elect; for it is dange-rous, oftentimes preſumptuous. It is a Title not founded on Conceit, but an holy and unblemiſhed Life. Think not that Conver-ſion is to be wrought in a Moment, neither that Sinners can immediately become Saints. Theſe Things are the Work of Time. Vi-cious Habits are not to be laid aſide, nor vir-tuous ones acquired in a Day. Expect not any extraordinary Illuminations, for they are abſolutely unneceſſary, becauſe the Con-ditions of Acceptance with God are plainly ſet forth to you in ſacred Writ; nor truſt to any other Aſſurances, than what that and your Conſcience afford. Follow them, and practiſe according to what the one preſcribes, and the other Dictates, and then your Hopes of Salvation will be well founded.

Yours.

LETTER

LETTER X.

To a MAN *of* TASTE.

THIS Place is ſo much crowded, that we are apprehenſive, it will not contain a tenth Part of thoſe, who are to come. Leſt any one ſhould eſcape a Puniſhment adequate to his Crimes, it has been determined to draught off ſeveral for your World. The Perſons ordered for Embarkation are thoſe who had enjoyed the Pleaſures of it, and were reputed Men of Taſte. They are ready to depart, waiting only for the Order of Sailing. Lord Gammon is converted into a Pair of Dice. The routing Ladies are made up into Packs of Cards. Sir John Reliſh is become a Carp, and is to be ſtewed in his own Blood. His Grace and Lord Harry are tied up in Bags againſt Newmarket Races, and L. P. with D. C. are to be entered for the next Courſe; little Aaron and Driver are to be the Riders. The Country Squires and Gentlemen of the Game are to be turned out for Hares, &c. and their Whippers-in for Hounds and Beagles. Several Weſt India Merchants are put

put up into Barrels for Turtles. The Cits are to be made into Veniſon Paſties and Marrow Puddings. Captain Brag is a Surgeon's Mate, and Major Bluſter, who had an Univerſity Education, Chaplain to his Regiment. Several fine Officers of the Navy and Army are to be ſent into the Country, and employed in your Manufactures. A Change at firſt diſagreeable, but it ſoon pleaſed, when the News came, that War had been declared with France. Thoſe who were rich at the Expence of their Country, are melted down into Specie to pay off the national Debt. Lawyers are become Clients; Rectors, Curates. The St———ns are eunuchized, and to be landed at Conſtantinople for the Uſe of the grand Seignior. The Cleopatras are ordered into Convents. Your good Fellows are to be ſent to Africa, and the ſwearing Blades to the Coaſt of Guiney. It would make you laugh to ſee the great Dons ſculking about and hiding themſelves. Though Men of Honour and Grandeur in your World, they are glad to give up their Titles, and mix with the common Herd. The Sufferings of thoſe who are to remain here, will not be leſs than thoſe ordered for Embarkation. For it has been moved in Council to give up

thoſe, who by their Power, Intereſt, Connivance, Weakneſs, Inability or Folly, have been the Occaſion of Injury and Oppreſſion, to the Rage and Fury of the oppreſſed. You cannot imagine, what a ſudden and prodigious Change this Motion has made in the Speech of our great Men. We hear nothing now of their Crowns, Mitres, Stars and Garters, Scarlet Robes or Fur Gowns; no talk of Liveries and Equipages: All Diſtinctions are laid aſide. But alaſs! it is in vain. There is no ſuch Thing as appearing in Maſquerade in theſe Parts; neither our Perſons, nor Vices can be concealed. You may diſguiſe your Actions in the other World, but as ſoon as you arrive here, the Cheat is known and laid open; and your Lot will be either to be puniſhed in this, or to return again and ſuffer as above mentioned in the other World.

Your's

A Newmarket Cock.

LETTER

LETTER XI.

To a D. D.

SINCE my laſt we have had ſtrange Doings in this Place. The Tables are turned upon us. We who enjoyed ſo much, are now in our Turn to ſuffer; for the Law of Retaliation has been ordained. The Subterraneous Powers have been aſſembled, and it was unanimouſly reſolved, that the Rectors and Vicars ſhould return again and reviſit the Earth. The Order pleaſed us well at firſt hearing, remembering the paſt Delights and Enjoyments: But as ſoon as it was known in what Manner we were to go, you cannot think how ſullen and dejected we appeared. A great Man who poſſeſſed only one thouſand a Year, is ſet out to a Curacy in Wales, value ſeven Pounds. A Chaplain to his Majeſty lately arrived in theſe Parts, is ordered back again to be Ordinary of Newgate. Several others were got ready for Tranſportation for the Fleet, but the Poſt came in and acquainted the Council, that a Marriage Act had paſſed; upon which

they were ordered to embark as Miſſionaries to America. I who had a Living of three hundred, out of which I gave my Curate, who had a Wife and Family, twenty Pound per Annum, am ordered to ſerve the ſame Cure. Others who had as much, and gave as little, are in the ſame diſmal and deplorable Situation. Several eminent and pious Divines, who ſeldom or ever read Prayers, are marked down for Hackney Readers, a Shilling a Turn. Others who never preached above four Times a Year, if ſo often, are ordered to bawl at George's for ten Years certain; and many eminent for Jockeying, Hunting, Horſe Racing, Cock Fighting and Electioneering, were ordered to be confined to their Studies, and read the Bible: A moſt grievous Puniſhment! Some other rich and dignified Clergymen, who, excluſive of their private Fortunes and Eſtates, poſſeſſed two, three, four or five huudred a Year, are entered upon the Liſt of occaſional Parſons, and are to read and preach according to the Prices they uſually gave, four, five, ſix, now and then ſeven Shillings and Six-pence, if the Church ſhould be larger than ordinary. I cannot give a particular Account of the ſeveral Deſtinations, till a particular

Account

Account of the Curate's Grievances has been received. We are informed, that there are ſeveral Garreteer Parſons; we partly believe it, but hope that it is not true. Many of us wiſh that we had been Curates; for it is very diſagreeable to ſuffer Pain after ſuch exquiſite Pleaſures received. I ſend you this Letter by Stealth; for an Order was given, that no Notice ſhould be ſent to the other World of theſe Proceedings, leſt you ſhould repent, and eſcape this Puniſhment. Though it was warmly oppoſed by a grave Judge, as a needleſs Precaution; for though they talk much, ſaith he, of Faith to others, yet they themſelves are very Thomas's, they will believe nothing but what they ſee and experience.

From your old Friend

and Sufferer,

A RECTOR.

P. S. It is talked of here, that the Puniſhment of the Rectors who are not ordered to return to the other World, will be executed upon them by ſuch Curates, who ſhould come this Way. It was in vain to

ſpeak againſt the Cruelty and Inhumanity of the Order; for it is well known, that little Favour but much Severity is to be expected from thoſe, whoſe Reſentment we have highly provoked. However we have this to comfort us, that as there are none of them in this Place, ſo we hope that there never will be any. When the Packet comes in, we immediately aſſemble to know, if there are any arrived; you cannot think what an agreeable Surprize and Joy it is to us not to find one.

LETTER XII.

To the RECTORS *and* VICARS.

BY the laſt Packet we had an Account, that ſeveral new Sects have ſprung up in the Church; that they have mightily prevailed, Followers being daily gained. The Heads of theſe Diviſions are, I find, under the ſame Influence, as many of the eſtabliſhed Divines, the Love of Money; and though ſpiritual Teachers, they are worldly minded Men. Though moſt of their Followers are extremely poor and indigent, yet the Prieſts can ſqueeze a comfortable Subſiſtence

ſiſtence from them. The Succeſs they have met with, has induced others to come into the Scheme; who from Diſappointment, or a Conſciouſneſs of their Inabilities, with a Mixture of Spleen and Melancholy, have commenced Preachers of Righteouſneſs. The moſt prevailing Cauſe is the Oppreſſion ſuffered from the Avarice of the rich and dignified Clergy. If many of them had had a decent Proviſion for themſelves and Families, Innovations would never have been thought of, nor met with ſuch Encouragement. The Neceſſaries of Life muſt be had. If the Church will not afford them, they will be ſought for elſewhere. It is eaſy for Perſons, who are full and want for nothing, to ſay that ſuch Men are of little Principle; that they ought to ſuffer all Inconveniencies, and ſubmit patiently to any Misfortune, rather than occaſion a Diviſion in, or ſeparate from the Church. But all Men have not this Power over themſelves. It is difficult to oppoſe Nature, or withſtand the Gratifications of Hunger and Thirſt. Poverty, though in itſelf not to be accounted an Evil, yet it is what moſt Men endeavour to avoid, and few can patiently endure. The ſuperior Clergy are a Proof of the the former, and the Noveliſts bear

Teſtimony to the latter. Wealth keeps many in the Church, and Want drives others out of it: And ſo long as ſome have too much and others too little; ſome ſeek for and poſſeſs more than they want, and others have not what is neceſſary for the Subſiſtence of themſelves and Families, the Peace and Unity of the Church cannot be preſerved. Whatſoever you or others may think, thoſe who foment theſe Diviſions will not be conſidered here as the Authors. The Puniſhment will fall heavieſt upon them, who compelled them thus to act. When living I was ſo far from oppreſſing my Curate, that there was little more Difference between us than the Title. I was blamed by many of my Brother Rectors for my Generoſity, or rather for giving away what I did not want. However, what then adminiſtered Pleaſure and Satisfaction, has now met with an ample Reward. The beſt Method you can purſue to put a Stop to theſe Diviſions, which prevail too much to the Prejudice of Religion, and the Diſgrace of its Profeſſors, is to make a reaſonable Proviſion for thoſe who are in the Church, that they may not be tempted to depart out of it. If a Regard for the Cauſe, which you have moſt ſolemnly engaged to

ſupport

ſupport and maintain cannot, let ſelf Intereſt prevail with you; for if theſe Schiſms encreaſe, by the Connections and Friendſhips they may make with Perſons of Power and Influence, Pluralities may be in Danger. They are now looked upon as contemptible, but they may become conſiderable. Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory, in which you are well verſed, will acquaint you with the amazing and extraordinary Events brought about by an heated Vulgar. As Religion ſeems to be upon the Decline in your World from the little Increaſe of Inhabitants in this, it is your Duty to follow every Method that may prevent the future Miſery of your Flock. I do aſſure you, that a more generous Behaviour to your Curates, will preſerve many in Union with the Church, and prevent not a few from leaving both it and Chriſtianity. The Avarice of the Clergy, you well know, has raiſed conſiderable Prejudices againſt Religion; has not a little countenanced Infidelity and Immorality: For what Opinion muſt they entertain of its Authority and Obligation, who are guilty of a Vice ſo ſeverely cenſured and reproved? What will be the Fate of ſuch, Scripture plainly informs you; to it

you

you are referred. If now you credit it not, be assured that you will hereafter experience it to be true:

From Paradise.

Your's, &c.

LETTER XIII.

To a RECTOR.

I Promised to send you an Account of what was done in the other World. We were very merry upon the Matter, imagining it to have been impossible. I was not a little surprised to find the Reverse. After I had been ferried over the Gulph, I was immediately conducted to the Exchange of departed Spirits; on the Pillars of which are fixed, after the Manner of the Exchange at London, the Vessels next to sail, the Places where, the Time when, and also of their Return. Looking round I saw the List of those, who were next to come to these Regions. The Names, Countries and Occupations were ranged alphabetically;

tically; likewiſe the Days of Trials for Divines, Phyſicians, Lawyers, Courtiers, Miniſters, Merchants, Mechanicks, &c. A Fondneſs for my native Country, and a Curioſity to ſee, if any of my Friends were upon the dead Liſt, led me to the Letter E. I had juſt entered upon the Letter S, when I was hurried away to a dark Room, wherein three Perſons ſat in the Appearance of Men, like to what you have read in Pagan Theology, ſurrounded with ſeveral others of the like Shape and Figure, whom I afterwards found to be the Council. At the Entrance into the Room I met ſeveral eminent Divines returning, who hung down their Heads and looked ſadly. This unexpected Sight made me anticipate my Sentence. Upon being placed at the Bar I was charged with Felony. The Crime ſtartled me not a little. I took Courage, however, and had Reaſon to expect an Acquittal, as my Conſcience ſeemed to be clear, and my Accuſers were Perſons, whom I had never before ſeen nor heard of: But upon Examination they appeared to have been my Pariſhioners, who ever ſince their Death had lodged this Bill againſt me, for privately taking away the Hat-bands, Gloves, Rings,

Rings, &c. which they had ordered to be given to my Curate, for his extraordinary Attendance at their Funerals. I was going to reply, but was prevented by the horrid Noiſe and Screeks of Lying-in Women, Midwives and Nurſes, who charged me with the ſame Crime committed at Chriſtenings and Churchings. Finding it impoſſible to avoid Conviction, I marched off without offering any Anſwer. I do aſſure you, that every new Cargo of departed Souls brings to my Mind the ſad Remembrance of ſtolen Gloves, Hatbands, &c. Upon my Return to the Exchange I found your Name on the dead Liſt. I adviſe you therefore immediately to give your Curate, an equivalent for your Lady's Sack and Cardinal, or elſe it will go hard with you here. I ſend you this by the firſt Packet for England, and am your afflicted Friend.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

To a CURATE.

THE laſt Return of the Boat to Paradiſe brought us three Rectors. You cannot imagine how we all ſtared; but the Surpriſe was ſoon over; for we were informed by a Ghoſt who came with them, that they had not enjoyed their Preferment a Year. Their Friends may grieve at ſo early a Loſs, but it has proved of ſingular Advantage to them: Another Year might have made them miſerable. This they ſeemed to be apprehenſive of, by acknowledging that they ſhould have followed the general Practice of doing little Duty and giving ſmall Wages. The Exchange was very agreeable to them, and afforded Matter of Joy to us, that theſe Men, who had always behaved well, were not diſappointed of the Reward; which no one who endeavours to merit fails of receiving. Few Men have ſuffered greater Afflictions than you and the reſt of your Brethren, have laboured more, or had leſs; but hitherto you have had the ſingular Happineſs of being ſupe-

ſuperior to them. You are now worn out in the Service of the Church, and cannot long continue in it. The Infirmities of old Age will haſten your Journey to this happy Region; where Trouble and Sorrow are felt no more. Some eminent Divines, we are informed, are deſirous of extending the Diſtinctions which ſubſiſt in your World to this. They will find themſelves miſtaken: For the Prince and the Beggar, the Biſhop and the Curate, the Counſellor and his Clerk, my Lord and his Coachman, her Ladyſhip with her Scullion, enjoy equal Degrees of Happineſs, without any Diſpleaſure or Diſguſt. They are well ſatisfied that had thoſe of meaner Station been placed in the ſame Situation, and bleſſed with the ſame happy Advantages, which they enjoyed by Nature, Birth or Fortune, they would have appeared as ſingularly great and good. Is it not enough to be deprived of all the Comforts of Life, but we muſt be afflicted after Death, and retain the contemptible Name of a Curate, after the Work is finiſhed? I uſed to wonder, why the Clergy were ſo eager after Preferment and Titles. The ridiculous Conceit mentioned, though not the only Motive, is, I ſuppoſe, a very prevailing one with ſome.

But

But as their Abilities are not greater, and their Labour in the Vineyard much leſs than thoſe of the loweſt Station in the Church, they will find an equal Reward to be not only juſt, but more than many of them can have any legal Claim to. You need not be under any Apprehenſions of ſerving a Curacy here, for we are all Servants alike. Names, Titles and Places expire with Life. At the Diſſolution of the World, when States, Kingdoms and Empires tumble into nothing, Crowns and Mitres are buried in the common Ruin, all Superiority and Inferiority will be at an End, thoſe Diſtinctions before neceſſary will then be rendered uſeleſs, and there will remain only one Paſtor, Jeſus Chriſt, and one Lord the Creator of all Things.

From your old Acquaintance,

From Paradiſe. A CURATE.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

To a RECTOR.

IN the other World you may remember, that I had the Reputation of a pious and learned Divine, a deep Caſuiſt, an excellent Preacher. From this Opinion I expected to receive particular Favours in this: But was greatly diſappointed, as you will find by the Sequel. Upon entering Tartarus I was ordered to appear before the Council, to receive the juſt Reward of paſt Actions. There were not wanting ſome Accuſations from the M—d—ſts, whom you know I rigidly oppoſed, both in my Sermons and Writings: But they were ſoon withdrawn. Immediately a profound Silence followed. The Cauſe, I afterwards found, was the unexpected Surpriſe of a Rector's eſcaping free from any Puniſhment. But the Surpriſe was ſoon over, the Packet which had been detained at Sea by a Storm arrived, wherein was a Letter containing the Particulars of my Life. The Letter being opened and read, it appeared that I had given my Curate, who had a Wife

and

and four Children, twenty Pound per Annum. The Value of my Living and other Places that I held were enquired into, which was upwards of four hundred a Year. I had only a Wife and one Child, to whom I could give but ten thouſand Pounds. It was in vain to plead, that my Curate's Salary was as much as could be ſpared; my former Sanctity availed nothing; and I was condemned for Avarice here, which in the other World is termed Frugality and Oeconomy. You ſee, Sir, how apt we are to be miſled by Cuſtom and Prejudice; for I never thought, that what had the Sanction, and was the common Practice of Men of Reputation, would have been imputed to me as a Crime: Though I was not a little ſtrook at my firſt Entrance to ſee many ſuch, whom I afterwards found to be in the ſame Condemnation. It would have been much better for me to have conſulted my future Happineſs, than to have ſought how to aggrandiſe my Family. Half that Fortune would have made me happy, and my Daughter comfortable. As there was a particular Friendſhip ſubſiſting between us when living, and you are alike culpable, I ſend you this Letter

to prevent your ſuffering, what has happened to your old Friend.

T. C.

LETTER XVI.

To the Reverend Mr. ———

WHEN upon Earth I was much addicted to the Study of Things curious and myſterious; amongſt which I reckoned Prophecies. Therein I laboured, and was very nice and exact in determining what Events had happened, and what Predictions were completing. This may be thought to have been no arduous Taſk; but I proceeded further, I told what Events would come to paſs. And here was the Misfortune, I could tell what would at certain Periods of Time happen to others, but was an entire Stranger to what ſhould happen to myſelf. When I talked of the Millenium, believe me, I never thought of coming here: When I railed at the Follies of the Age, I did not imagine, that I ſhould be convicted of worldly Mindedneſs. I have experienced to my Sorrow, that I had been very

very expert in detecting the Faults of others, and overlooking my own; in looking upon that as a Virtue in myſelf, which I cenſured and condemned as a Vice in my Neighbour. You know, Sir, that in the Opinion of many I had good Preferment, near four hundred and no Family; but this did not ſatisfy, a Prebendary was wanted, not for the Value of it, merely the Title; the Addition of three hundred being of no Uſe to one, who already had enough. This Plea ſerved very well, in Excuſe for my Avarice in the other World, but was rejected here. They are thoroughly acquainted with the Human Heart, and the moſt ſecret Affections are ſo known to them, that they cannot be impoſed upon, nor deceived. I was aſked, if I intended to have been content with the Title, and to have diſpoſed of the Salary annexed to it in Charitable Uſes. The Queſtion ſtrook me dumb; for I found in myſelf no Inclination to part with the Money, and I thought it juſt to partake of the Reward, as I ſhould be engaged in more Duty. I was informed, that I had not been actuated by Ambition, but Covetouſneſs; that the Title without the Stipend would not have been courted, nor accepted. Being ſufficiently convinced of

my Error, I withdrew. This, Sir, according to the Accounts here received, will be, with many others, your Caſe, unleſs prevented. As you are a well-meaning Man, have been of ſome Service to the World, and have been rather ignorantly, than wilfully deceived, I was permitted to write this Letter, therein to adviſe you to reſt ſatisfied with the Preferment you have, not to ſeek for nor deſire more, which cannot, if obtained, be the leaſt Addition to your preſent Happineſs, but may be productive of as much Miſery to you as to your diſconſolate Brother.

R. T.

LETTER XVII.

To a CURATE.

THE laſt Time we met, amongſt other Things, we talked of the Hardſhips of the inferior Clergy. How difficult it was for a Perſon in that Situation to act conſiſtent with the Dignity of his Office, and not be guilty of any Meanneſs, whereby his

his Character would be expoſed, and himſelf rendered contemptible. The Smalneſs of his Income makes him upon a Level with the Vulgar, and the Rich treat him, as the Philiſtines did Samſon, only to make them Sport. Being naturally of a free and open Behaviour, I had frequent Invitations; ſome were excuſed, and others accepted, leſt I ſhould ſeem to be diſreſpectful. I ſoon found the Inconvenience. When the Table was diſcharged, the Deſert was uſually ſerved up with obſcene Jeſts and Bawdy Stories; which were generally directed to the Parſon, as if he was as fond of hearing, as they of uttering Nonſenſe. The Converſation, when in Company with their Equals or Superiors, was decent and becoming. To what can this Difference be imputed? To the Want, I will not ſay of Religion, but good Senſe and good Manners; for the Office is alike ſacred both in Rector and Curate. And it is evident, that this Inconſiſtency in their Behaviour proceeds not from the Reſpect due to Religion, but the Fear of affronting a Man as great as themſelves. This Mirth and Jocularity is Folly and Madneſs; happy for them could it be ſo accounted in this World. By receiving ſuch Treatment with

a Sneer, I loſt many an elegant and delicious Repaſt: But I am now admitted to better Entertainment. My Regard for Decency was termed Moroſeneſs, and I was looked upon as a Formaliſt for oppoſing Licenciouſneſs. I was laughed at for a very weak Fellow, in not encouraging the falſe Humour, as it would have been of Service to my temporal Intereſt; but it was better to ſuffer any Inconvenience, than to receive the Wages of Unrighteouſneſs, in ſacrificing Religion to the Scoff and Deriſion of every trifling Libertine. I ſuffered much from not temporiſing, yet the little I had was enjoyed with Satisfaction, for it was procured with Innocence; and I had Spirit and Reſolution enough to ſupport me under all the Accidents of Life. What is now the Conſequence? Joy inexpreſſible and inconceivable. The Reward is ineſtimable; greater than could have been expected; greater than could have been deſired; much greater than was deſerved. One Moment's Enjoyment here will overbalance all the Afflictions you labour under. Diſregard and deſpiſe therefore the Comforts of Life, if they cannot be procured and enjoyed with Innocence. Give up the little Advantages which may ariſe from humouring

humouring the Foibles of the Rich and Powerful; remembering the Glory you will receive in Reverſion. Court not Preferment at the Expence of your Maſter's Cauſe, but live as you have hitherto lived, not debaſing nor proſtituting your Character, and you need not doubt of being happy with your old Friend.

From Paradiſe.

R. S.

LETTER XVIII.

To a FATHER.

Honoured Sir,

I SEND not this Letter to upbraid, but to ſhew that Parents are oftentimes miſtaken in Kindneſs and Affection towards their Children, and the Meaſures they take to do them good are oftentimes the Occaſion of their Misfortunes in Life. It is, I allow, natural for Parents to entertain an high Opinion of their Childrens Abilities. Hence it is, that they do not ſeek for ſuch Employments, which they are capable of diſcharging with Credit and Reputation,

but such as are profitable and beneficial, not suited and adapted to their Talents, in which they can make no Figure and Appearance. Few are born with a Genius and Inclination for Letters; yet the fond Parent looks upon his Son to have as good a Capacity, and as able to be as great a Scholar as his Neighbour's. Hence the poor unhappy Youth is compelled to study, what he has no Taste for, the learned Languages; and he, who would have been a reputable Tradesman, or an ingenious Mechanick, becomes, after suffering much scholastick Discipline, an ignorant and contemptible Lawyer or Divine. How hard the Fate of the young Squire, who is obliged to go through the dull and heavy Fatigue of a School, and learn Heathen Greek; who would be more happy in whistling after his Father's Plough, and more usefully employed in feeding the Poultry, or churning with Betty and Sue in the Dairy. John, with half the Education of his young Master, would have been the better Parson. Many a Jemmy Fellow, had the Parents consulted right, would have been a compleat Valet de Chambre. Many a pretty Officer would have snapt his Fingers with a good Air in a Barber's Shop.

Shop. Many a Carman and Porter would have been an Honour and Ornament to the State, had they been properly educated. Many a young Templer, who has no Reliſh for Coke and Littleton, would have cut a ſmart Figure behind a Mercer's Counter; and Dr. R——k, by a liberal Education, might have proved a ſecond Mead, and been Phyſician in Ordinary to his Majeſty. Young Hobſon, the Carrier's Son, was more fit for Buſineſs than your Son, who could have managed a Farm to his Advantage. It would be of great Service and Benefit to Society, and the true and real Intereſt of Families, if Parents firſt conſidered the Temper, Diſpoſition and Genius of their Children, before they provided for them; not regarding what they can do for them, but what they are able and qualified to do for themſelves: Then you would not ſo often meet with Red Coats without Courage, Black Gowns without Learning, nor full Bottoms without Brains underneath. By bringing up Children to Profeſſions for which they have no Head, they are not only uſeleſs, but a Detriment to Society, as they expoſe thoſe Profeſſions, by their Inability, to Contempt and Ridicule. Here are Sons of Taylors, Shoemakers, Butchers, &c.

&c. who, had their natural Parts been rightly improved, would have been worthy of the Cabinet of the greateſt Prince in Europe, and have deſervedly filled the higheſt Stations both in Church and State. Here are ſeveral young Lords, Baronets and rich Heirs, who having been exerciſed in Studies for which they had no Capacity, turned out mere Blockheads, and had an entire Averſion to all Kind of Reading, but Plays, Novels and Romances. Infinite is the Number of thoſe, who having neglected the Buſineſs they were qualified for, had ſpent their Fortunes in Trade, which they had neither Skill nor Conduct to manage. There are others who began the World with nothing, and acquired large Fortunes by what they wanted. This was the Caſe of your unfortunate Son, who engaged in Buſineſs which he diſliked; but it was your Choice, and I ſubmitted. I hope, Sir, your Loſs in me will make you pay a Regard for the future Diſpoſition of your Children, that they may live happily and comfortably. It is a continual Trouble and Sorrow to ingenuous Minds, not to be able to diſcharge the Truſts repoſed in them with Honour and Reputation. I know you intend my younger Brother for

Holy

Holy Orders, on Account of a good Living in the Family: But Frank has a Deſire to go to Sea. Pray, Sir, don't ſpoil a good Sailor, to make an illiterate Parſon; nor deprive your Country of a brave and gallant Officer, to gratify the fooliſh Fondneſs of a Mother, and to ſave a few Hundreds more for your eldeſt Son Hal, who has, unknown to you, already mortgaged the eſtate his Uncle left him, for the Uſe of the Gentlemen at White's, and the Service of the Ladies at Haddock's.

From your Son,

From Paradiſe.

T. C.

LETTER XIX.

To a PARISH CLERK.

I Come up to toun a tol cuntry boy i sune got rid of my long hare an hob nales i whas sont by thee squire of vathers paris to a parſon they laft at poor i as an ignarant fello but meiſter hew whas a man of graite sens and knewd all the plants and stares

treted

treted me kinely and egad in a littel time i whas mad cumpany for meiſter from a fut-boy i whas choſe thee clark of our graite church being thee onely one in paris hew culd rite and reed that wuld hav it i tolld thee curat 1 day hew had effronted me that i culd cumpaſs ſalmons as wel as he when meiſter dyd and the old curat whent away havin ſum Mune i sune got me into thee favur of thee new rector and i begun to follo bruther clarkes in talkin big to thee poor curat that i whas as grait a man and culd make as gud a parsun as any a one of them al that many of them ware old wimen in the pulput and sum culd not reed inglis and wonted a meles mete that I ſhuld bery cristn and marre wen i plesed and he ſhuld cum he had the impedanse 1 ſantes day to bid me to put him on the sirplace and tolld me that i whas not to be in the wasttree and that i whas an ignarant fello i laft at him than but am now very dull.

I have the Senſe to know, that I was not, what you and others pretend to be, very wiſe, but very ignorant. Behave with proper Reſpect and Deference to your Miniſters, both Rector and Curate. Be not ſo vain to conceit, becauſe any Fellow, who

can

can make a Noiſe, ſing So, la, me, fa, and anſwer Amen by Heart, is fit to be a Clerk, that ſuch Qualifications are ſufficient Recommendations to the Miniſtry. Be content in the Station, which Providence has placed you in, for you have only juſt Merit enough to fill it. Never imagine, that you are able to become a Teacher, who are as yet to learn your Duty. Your Schoolmiſtreſs has indeed qualified you for the Poſt, which you poſſeſs: But your Friends and ſelf knew, that you had no Capacity for greater Attainments, and therefore they put thee to what God and Nature deſigned thee, an handicraft Trade. Your Place is indeed more profitable than the Curate's, your collecting the Tythes, keeping the Regiſter, doing Services for the Rector, &c. give you ſome Advantage over him in Reſpect of Temporals; but in Regard of Office and Ability you are infinitely inferior. I do aſſure you, that your Contempt and Diſreſpect of him, will be deemed equally criminal, and liable to the ſame Puniſhment, as if ſhewn to Religion. Mind your ſinging, and pronounce your Amen with an audible Voice, but meddle with nothing further, if you would not make yourſelf ridiculous and contemptible. Though you are an honeſt,

believe

believe me, for the Dead always ſpeak Truth, that you are a very ſimple Fellow. If you may be able, from what you hear, to talk very well of Religion to others more ignorant than yourſelf; yet remember, that to ſay as you are taught is the peculiar Excellency of a Parrot; but to teach others what they ought to ſay, requires ſomething more than the meer Faculty of Speech, an Underſtanding which you have not, and an Addreſs which you cannot acquire. The beſt Proof that you can give of your Senſe, is to be conſcious of your Inabilities, to treat thoſe with Reſpect, whoſe Merit claims, and Office demands it, and to keep that Diſtance in the other World, which you muſt obſerve in this. Upon my Arrival here, as uſual, I mixed with the Parſons; but my Impudence was ſoon chaſtiſed, being ordered to Sextons and Grave Diggers Lodge. Some Clerks meet with a better Reception, which is owing to a more decent Behaviour, which if you do not think fit to follow, you muſt ſuffer with your old Friend and Brother

AMEN.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

To a D. D.

WHAT you now are, I once was, a zealous Friend of the Church. Moſt of my Diſcourſes were levelled againſt Diſſenters; by which I eſtabliſhed a Reputation for Learning and Orthodoxy. But I was here informed, that my Diſcourſes tended more to inflame than reconcile the Differences ſubſiſting amongſt Chriſtians, and I had dwelt ſo much upon the Decency and Propriety of the Diſcipline of our Church, as to have neglected the more weighty and important Matters of the Goſpel. It would have proved of more Advantage to the Hearer, not leſs to Religion, to have explained and recommended the Duties of it, than encouraged a Phariſaical Righteouſneſs. The Controverſy I had ſolemnly engaged in, was againſt Vice and Folly. The Converſion of one Soul from the Error of his Ways, would have been of real Service to my Maſter's Cauſe: But to have beſtowed Cenſures on certain Men for a mere Difference in Opinion, or paying

ing little Regard to Things indifferent, was reckoned an Abuſe of Time and Talents, as it gave an Advantage to Infidelity, and inſtead of Love and Harmony encouraged Variance and Diſcord amongſt Mankind. For what I was rewarded in your World, in this I am to be puniſhed. You well know what Detriment Civil Society has received from fomenting and cheriſhing thoſe Diviſions: So that what your Maſter ſaid upon another Occaſion, ſeems to be literally verified, that *he came not to ſend Peace upon the Earth, but a Sword.* Believe me, that enforcing the Practice of Virtue and Piety in an Age, when the Cauſe of Infidelity and Immorality daily gains ground, would be acting more conſiſtent with the Character of a Goſpel Miniſter, than to be gravely diſputing the Preference of a black Gown to a black Cloak, of kneeling to ſitting at the Sacrament, of making to omitting the Sign of the Croſs, of praying by a written to a premeditated Form of Prayer, and ſuch like Articles of great Importance, which adminiſter no Comfort, no Conſolation to the Hearer, and make him neither the wiſer nor better Chriſtian. As a Churchman I made great Merit in maintaining, and others eſteemed it no leſs in

oppoſing

oppoſing the Opinions of the Church. But both I and they have Reaſon to repent of the Folly, ſince our Arrival in this Place. It was hardly credited here, that Men could have employed their Parts about ſuch Trifles; that either the one or the other Opinion ſhould have afforded Matter of Offence; and the admitting one or rejecting the other would entitle or ſeclude any from civil Offices and Employments. What our Puniſhment will be is not determined; for they are at a Loſs to know what to inflict upon ſuch ſtrange Criminals: Though we are not without preſent Sufferings, ſince we who were accounted the wiſeſt amongſt Men when living, are now treated as mere old Women, and are the ſtanding Jeſt of all the Inhabitants of theſe Parts. To be the Friend of Mother Church has been admitted as an Excuſe for the greateſt Crimes and Villainies; I need not inſtance to you in Particulars: From your Acquaintance with the World you can be no Stranger to the Riots, Drunkenneſs, &c. of which ſhe has been made the Sanction. She may be of uſe to preſerve a Reputation with you, but cannot excuſe Guilt here. You would do well to acquaint your Flock of this, and let them

know, that thoſe only are the true Friends of the Church who practiſe Religion moſt, and that their Eſteem and Affection for it cannot be better ſhewn than by Temperance and Moderation. In complying with this Advice you will then in Reality be, what you are now only in Appearance, a true Miniſter of the Goſpel.

Yours,

A CONTRAVERSIALIST.

LETTER XXI.

To the L—ds C—m———rs *of the* Ad———ty.

YOU will underſtand by this Letter, that we are well acquainted with the Affairs of your World; from whence we lately received this Piece of Intelligence, which ſurprized and aſtoniſhed us. A Tranſaction ſo extraordinary from the Beginning to the End of it, that we have never known nor heard of its Parallel. The Conduct of Ad———l B—g is not difficult to be accounted for: But the Behaviour of ſome of the C—t M———l is ſtrange, inconſiſtent and ridiculous. Why did they heſitate upon

upon Evidence ſo clear, ſenſible and circumſtantial? Why miſtake or overlook Part of the Verdict, ſince Cowardice as well as Negligence was his Crime? Why thoſe ſudden, unexpected Qualms of Conſcience after Sentence pronounced? Why ſollicitous to procure a Reprieve, when before they were unanimous in conſenting to his Death? Was the twelfth Article abſolute? It is falſe; they had a diſcretionary Power. If, as they pretend, he was only guilty of an Error in Judgment, why did they condemn, whom they might have acquitted? If the Article was certain Death to thoſe, who ſhould be found guilty of it, and his Crime did not ſubject him to it, they could not in Equity and Law have puniſhed, but ſhould have releaſed him, notwithſtanding the popular Odium and Diſpleaſure which they might have incurred; to which no Man ſhould pay any Regard, when it is wrongly founded. Why do they, or others, if not C——ds, and intend not to play the ſame baſe and inglorious Part, want a Repeal or Amendment of that Article? The truly brave never act from a Principle of Fear; they engage not as compelled by Laws, but from a real diſintereſted Love of their Country. Laws

were never made for the good, but the bad; to prevent Knaves and Cowards from uſurping the Rewards due to Merit, and eſcaping the Puniſhment due to their Demerits. To avoid falling under the Article, let them do what is right, and they will have Praiſe, Honour and Reward for the ſame: But if they do that which is wrong, they may juſtly fear it, let Diſgrace, Infamy and Death be their Portion. This is the Opinion of us, whoſe Names are under-written, formerly Admirals of Great-Britain. We are further of Opinion, that the Sentence of Death may be juſtly executed; for he appears to us to have been not only negligent but a Coward, as he might have aſſiſted the Van, diſtreſſed the Enemy, and endeavoured to relieve or ſuccour Minorca, but would not. Beſides, has he given in any Plan, Scheme, or Deſign he had formed, to excuſe his not bearing down to and engaging his Diviſion? But he came, he ſaw, and when, like the great Julius, he might have conquered, he ingloriouſly retreated, rather fled from a flying Enemy. We are alſo of Opinion, that the Diſgrace brought upon the Britiſh Navy would have been in ſome Meaſure removed by an immediate Execution of A—l B—g; that

that his Reſpite was weak, as he had no Diſcoveries to make, he was too fond and anxious of Life to have concealed them; that the Weepers of the C—t M——l, thoſe alſo who look upon the twelfth Article as too rigid and ſevere, or petitioned to have it conſidered, altered or amended, ſhould be broke, and for ever rendered incapable of ſerving the Government in any capacity whatſoever; that the Lieutenants of Men of War and Commanders of Privateers, who have behaved gallantly, ſhould be immediately preferred to their Commands; that the Articles of War ſhould, if poſſible, be made more ſtrict; the Terror indeed of the Coward, but the Pride of the Brave; and that whoſoever is found guilty of Death, ſhould be executed without Reſpect of Perſons; and none other Reſpite allowed, but what may be judged neceſſary to prepare them for this World. That the ancient Honour and Glory of the Britiſh Flag may be retrieved, this infamous Stain be blotted out by the future Conduct and Bravery of your Naval Commanders, and that you Gentlemen may go on with the ſame Spirit, Vigour and Judgment you have hitherto diſcovered, and your Endeavours for the publick Good be always

crowned with Succeſs, is the hearty and ſincere Wiſh of your Friends,

Admiral HOWARD,
——— DRAKE,
——— PENN,
——— BLAKE,
——— MONK,
——— BENBOW,
——— WAGER,
——— BALCHEN,
——— WARREN, &c. &c. &c.

From Paradiſe.

This Letter was received before A—— B——'s Execution.

LETTER XXII.

To a JUSTICE of PEACE.

SIR,

IT was my Misfortune to be born fair and poor. The Circumſtances of my Parents were low and mean. They had no Time to give Inſtructions, and no Money to ſpare to ſend me to School, the Family being

being large *, and they buſied in procuring our daily Subſiſtence. We were all employed as ſoon as able, and made uſeful and ſerviceable to each other; at the Age of ſeven we, in ſome Degree, earned the Bread we ate. Notwithſtanding the hard Fare and coarſe Diet, I lived happily under the thatched Roof, for I lived innocently. I was then inſenſible of my Beauty, and my Pride was only to finiſh my daily Taſk, to acquire the Eſteem and Approbation of my Parents. What Pleaſure, what Satisfaction did I then receive! But this Happineſs did not long continue. A Gentleman of Fortune in the Neighbourhood had entertained a ſecret Paſſion for me. The better to gratify it, being at the Age of ſixteen, he aſked me of my Parents as an Aſſiſtant to his Houſe-keeper. They readily and chearfully complied, thinking it would be an Advantage to me, but principally as I ſhould be taken off their Hands, and there would be one leſs in Family to provide for. From hence ſprung the Miſery, which I afterwards endured. My Maſter early diſcovered his Inclination, by taking more than ordinary Notice of me above the reſt of the Servants, ſpeaking kindly, and making little

* Nine Children.

Preſents. I looked upon this to be the Effect of pure good Nature, and I uſed more than ordinary Care and Diligence in my Place, to render myſelf more agreeable; which did not extinguiſh, but increaſe the Flame. The Houſe-keeper, whom he made his Confident, ſoon undeceived me, and it was not long before he acquainted me, that he loved. I was ſurpriſed, aſhamed, confounded. He vowed, he ſwore that he was ſincere; I anſwered not, but offered to retire; he drew me to him; neither my Confuſion, Innocence, nor Simplicity could protect me from the Villain's Luſt. He aſked, I denied; he threatened, I trembled; he promiſed, I believed. When the Time drew near, that my Shame could be no longer concealed with Safety to his Character and Reputation, he removed me to Town, under the Tuition and Inſpection of his Procureſs the Houſe-keeper. The Babe did not live to be acquainted with its infamous Birth, but died in the Month. My Maſter looked upon this as a fortunate Turn, and thought himſelf relaſed from any further Obligation to take Care of and provide for the Mother; he therefore ordered the Houſe-keeper to diſcharge me. But the baſe perfidious Wretch countermanded

manded it; fearful of my returning Home, and expoſing his Hypocriſy, as he paſſed in the Country for an honeſt, pious and civil Gentleman. Not content with ſpoiling me of my Virtue and Innocence, he made me miſerable. One Evening he called a Coach, carried me to a Bagnio, and left me there ſleeping. You cannot imagine how great my Surprize and Conſternation, when I awaked to find him gone, and myſelf amongſt Strangers. After a Week's Confinement, hard Treatment, and the Fear of a Jail, I complied with the Terms of the Houſe. Though I entertained the beſt Company and received handſome Preſents, yet I was always Debtor to my Keeper for Cloaths and Board. At the End of the Year my Beauty grew ſtale, and with two more young Girls I was turned out of Doors, to make Room for three new Faces. I then, as the Phraſe is, came upon the Town, and commenced Street Walker. I ſhall paſs over in Silence the various Scenes of Lewdneſs and Debauchery, in which I was concerned; which I now reflect upon with Horror, and ſincerely repent of, but too late. What could I do? How could I quit the Paths of Vice? My Parents would

not

not receive me; my Friends and Relations diſowned and ſhunned me; and though capable of Service, where, and of whom, could I have procured a Character, and without a Character who would have taken me into their Houſe? Thus I was compelled to walk on, 'till Death, by an infamous Diſeaſe, put an End to a wretched Life. This is the diſtreſſed Condition of many of our Sex, which highly merits the Pity and Compaſſion of the Legiſlature, ſince our Baſeneſs and Wickedneſs, is only to contribute to the enriching, thoſe Agents of Hell, our Keepers. One Method to prevent many from following Ways ſo fatal and pernicious to their Virtue and their Eaſe, would be to puniſh thoſe Keepers of diſorderly Houſes, with Tranſportation for Life; (a ſlight and trivial Puniſhment for the Crimes, which they are the Authors of, and the Diſtreſs and Miſery they bring upon Thouſands) that every Houſe or Tavern Keeper, who entertains or harbours any ſuch Perſons, ſhould, upon Conviction, be liable to an heavy Fine and Impriſonment, and upon Default of Payment, to be tranſported for a certain Number of Years; and to paſs to their reſpective Pariſhes the Perſons

ſons guilty of this Vice, and not, as it is uſual, to ſend them to hard Labour for a few Days, (which ſeldom cures, oftentimes hardens Offenders) and thoſe only of the meaneſt Sort, who have no Lord to protect them, no Bully to fight their Cauſe. By this Method they would have Time and Opportunity of repenting, and be prevented from running that Length of Sin and Folly, as renders Repentance and Amendment of Life impracticable, and will unavoidably terminate in Infamy in your World, and Miſery in this. Had theſe or ſome ſuch Laws been in Force ten Years ago, many who are now to ſuffer Torments, would have been entitled to everlaſting Happineſs; which, Sir, would have been the Lot, amongſt others, of the unfortunate.

KITTY FREELOVE.

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

To the Reverend Mr. ———

WHEN living I was very fond of the Writings of the Fathers. Their ſpeculative Notions and Modes of Worſhip and Diſcipline, I was hugely pleaſed with. I held nothing to be good, but what they approved; and I looked upon thoſe, who oppoſed, contradicted, or did not admit their Authority, to be the Enemies of Chriſtianity, and thoſe who corrected the Errors of their Tranſcribers and Commentators, to have done conſiderable Service to Religion. As I admired their Sentiments, ſo I endeavoured to imitate their Manners. I was allowed to have been an inimitable Pattern of primitive Sanctity, Gravity, and Auſterity, and I find that I am to this Day ſpoken of in your World, as a very great and good Man; but in this I make a different Appearance. I was called to an Account for a waſte of Time, and for troubling Mankind with the Opinions of Men, as weak and fallible as their Interpreter. I was told, that notwithſtanding the great Merit and Reputa-

Reputation I had acquired, I had forgot, overlooked, or neglected one Part of primitive Chriſtianity, Liberality. Upon which Account my Knowledge was looked upon as vain, my Piety counterfeited. As I had good Preferment in the Church and no Family, I was able to make a decent Proviſion for my Curate, and his four Children. I was aſked in what Manner I had diſpoſed of my ſix hundred a Year. To which I made this Reply; That I had ſpent much in making a curious and valuable Collection of the Fathers, Popiſh Writers, and controverſial Divines; and I did not apprehend that I had beſtowed my Money laviſhly in purchaſing, nor ſpent my Time fooliſhly in ſtudying them, as it was a Duty incumbent upon a Miniſter of the Goſpel, to prevent his Flock from falling into any dangerous Notions, either of Faith or Practice. To which I was anſwered, that with a Variety of Learning I had diſplayed little Judgement; that I had been very happy in tranſcribing, not inventing; that I had been ſo deeply read in Ignatius, Barnabas, Clemens, Chryſoſtom, &c. as to have neglected the Writings of the Apoſtles; that I had revived the Memory of Hereſies long ſince buried in Oblivion; that I preached more againſt

againſt the Abuſes, than ſet forth the Uſes of Chriſtianity; that by this Means I had encouraged and promoted Hatred and Strife, rather than Peace and Harmony amongſt Chriſtians; I was in ſhort told, that had I given the Value of a thouſand uſeleſs and unneceſſary Volumes to my Curate, I ſhould have had more real Learning, and been much the better Prieſt; and my Hearers, who were plain ſimple Folk, would have been more acquainted with the Doctrines and Precepts of Chriſtianity than Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory and Antiquity, which were of no Uſe or Benefit to them, either in Trade or Religion. Their Bible was enough for them to learn and underſtand, and it was my Duty to have expounded it to them; not to have concerned myſelf with other Mens Interpretation of Scripture, which might have more of Learning and Ingenuity, than Reaſon and Truth. You ſee, Sir, of what great Value the Fathers are here; their Authority is eſteeemed no better nor greater than your's or mine. Nothing paſſes in theſe Parts but what has the Sanction of Chriſt and his Apoſtles; whoſe Precepts and Inſtructions, you would do well publickly to recommend, and keep your Ancients for private Entertainment; with

with whom the Generality of Men have no Acquaintance, and therefore they are more fit to be confined to the Study or the Preſs, than to appear in the Pulpit.

Your's

A PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN.

LETTER XXIV.

To the Reverend Dr. ———

YOU may remember that I once conſulted you concerning the Legality of accepting another Living. Your Anſwer was, that every Man was to do the beſt for himſelf; that it was not unlawful, unreaſonable, nor unſcriptural to poſſeſs two Livings. The great Opinion I had entertained of your Learning and Piety, together with your Example, determined me. Upon Enquiry I found the Practice to have been general, and I was the more eaſily reconciled to it. I principally reſided upon my Living in Town, and the other, in Imitation of my Superiors, I ſupplied in the cheapeſt Manner. But alaſs! when I came here I ſoon found that I had been deceived; that you

you had conſulted well in Regard of Temporals, but my Profeſſion had been ſlighted and neglected. I was convinced of this, when called upon to give an Account of my Truſt, one Part of which I knew only by receiving the Tythes. I was ſo aſhamed and confounded, that I knew not what to ſay, and would have gladly ſneaked away with thoſe, who were drawing off; upon whoſe Foreheads this Accuſation was written, *theſe are the Men whoſe Godlineſs was Gain.* After they were gone, a Number of Men, Women and Children appeared. Upon enquiring who they were, I was ſurlily anſwered, your Pariſhioners. Immediately my Ears were ſtunned with Complaints and Upbraidings, that through my Neglect and Indifference they were miſerable. From my Example, and the little Concern I ſhewed for their Spiritual Welfare, they thought that Religion was the Invention of Prieſts; that they were only obliged to obſerve its Precepts out of Decency; and that they might lawfully tranſgreſs them, whenever it ſuited, either with their Intereſt, Pleaſure, or Convenience. Some of theſe Complaints were eaſily removed, being made by thoſe who had an Underſtanding equal to my own, and were fully acquainted with

their

their Duty, and their Obligations to perform it. In Excuſe for their Crimes they indeed pleaded my Non-Reſidence, but it proved ineffectual. But there were ſome, whoſe Abſence I could have diſpenſed with, and whoſe Preſence threw me into the greateſt Agony; they were poor ignorant Wretches, who could not read, and therefore had none other Way of knowing their Duty, but from what they ſaw and heard. To my Account they placed their Misfortunes; to me, they ſaid, were their Spiritual Concerns committed, concerning which I had never made any Enquiry. I faintly urged what you had before ſaid, that it was not unſcriptural. Inſtead of an Anſwer, I had the Goſpel put into my Hands. In vain did I ſeek for the Words Pluralities and Non-Reſidence; but many were the Paſſages which occurred to me in turning over the Leaves, by which I was commanded *to feed, to teach, to inſtruct, to take Care of my Flock, &c.* It would have been ridiculous to have attempted a Defence of my Conduct from Law and Reaſon, ſince I was plainly condemned by Scripture; I therefore acknowledged my Error, and was for the preſent diſmiſſed. You have now read my unhappy Caſe: The ſame will be yours, unleſs you em-

brace the preſent Opportunity of preventing it. Let no pecuniary Advantages prevail with you to ſacrifice Duty to Intereſt, and be content with a decent Proviſion, for you will find one Pariſh to be ſufficient, if you manage it properly. Your Family may be enriched by the Acquiſition of another; but believe me, from Experience I ſpeak, that by it you will make an indifferent Figure in this World.

Your's

A PLURALIST.

LETTER XXV.

To the Reverend Mr. ———

I WAS one of thoſe miſtaken and unhappy Perſons, who thought that any one might take upon him the ſacred Office, who by Intereſt or Services could procure a Title to a Living. My Relations, who were well acquainted with my Abilities, put me to what Nature had deſigned me for, a Trade. But I quickly grew weary of the Re-

Reſtraint and Confinement, which Buſineſs required, and having an Intereſt in a great Family, I procured a Preferment in the Church.. As I had been taught to read well, I found no Difficulty in performing that Part of my Office; and though I could not compoſe, yet Sermons, you know, are to be had at an eaſy Expence. To ſatisfy the ſcrupulous and doubtful, I had recourſe to learned Commentators and controverſial Divines, never relying upon or giving my own Judgement, from a Conſciouſneſs of my Inability. By this Artifice my Ignorance was termed Modeſty. I never entered into Diſputes and Controverſies, and always avoided or waved Religious Topicks. I was a merry Companion, preſent at all Entertainments, and uſually dined with the 'Squire on Sundays. I paſſed my Time very comfortably and pleaſantly, and was accounted a good natured honeſt Fellow, though not a great Divine. No ſooner had I departed, but I found my Mirth and Pleaſantry to have been introductory to much Sorrow; and I had Reaſon to repent of intruding into an Office, for which I knew my Incapacity, and to which I had no juſt and legal Pretenſion. I thought it not criminal, as Religion was looked upon as a

Trade, to leave a worſe to follow a better Profeſſion. I was ſomewhat the better for it in the other World, but am conſiderably the worſe for it in this. Though you, Sir, with many others, make a Jeſt of this, you will find it to be a ſerious Matter, and meet with ſevere Diſcipline here, not only from an Abuſe of Talents, but for expoſing Religion to Contempt; for though any one may be made, yet it is not every one ſo made who is a Parſon. Upon my Arrival here I met with ſeveral Brothers of the Trade, who died before I had entered into Orders. From their Teſtimony and the odd Appearance I made, it was doubted, whether or no I had been ordained. In all Probability I ſhould have been tried for an Impoſtor, had not an Inn-Keeper, who died of a Surfeit at an Election Dinner, accidentally came in and teſtified, that being Rector of the Pariſh, I had ſaid Grace. This Diſcovery proved of little Uſe; for being aſked, what Inducement I had to commence a Prieſt, I readily anſwered (not imagining that would be reckoned a Sin, which is generally approved of in the other World) *the Love of Money*. The Words were no ſooner uttered, but I was ſeized with

with an uncommon Shivering, and I felt ſomething troubling me within, called Conſcience, with which I uſed to frighten the Weak and Ignorant, and never knew till now, that it had a real Exiſtence. Sentence was going to be pronounced, but from a Conſciouſneſs of Guilt I retired, and acknowledge the Puniſhment I am to ſuffer to be juſt. You ſee, Sir, what you and others are to expect, who have ſtolen into the Church. As the Profits received in it are conſiderable, I am perſuaded that you will not relinquiſh them. A conſtant Attendance upon your Truſt, and a faithful Diſcharge of it, will atone for your Crime, and prevent you hereafter from having any Share in the Misfortunes of ſeveral reverend Exciſemen, Fidlers, Bookſellers, Coblers, &c.

Your well Wiſher.

LETTER XXVI.

To the Reverend Dr. ———

AS ſoon as I had left the Body I found myſelf on the Banks of a River, ſurrounded with a great Number of departed Spirits; who after they had viewed me, ſighed and ſhook their Heads. As I walked along and wondered at the ſtrange Appearance, being ſad and penſive, and muſing with myſelf concerning my Fate, I was agreeably rouzed from the melancholy Fit, by ſuch delightful and raviſhing Harmony, as I had never before heard. What greatly ſurpriſed me was, that the Spirits about me immediately diſappeared. Upon turning about I diſcovered a ſmall Boat. As it drew towards the Shore a Trumpet ſounded, and forthwith about an hundred Ghoſts of pleaſant and chearful Countenance appeared, conducted by a venerable old Man. I mixed with the Company and got ſafe on board; but the Pilot quickly diſcerning that I was of a different Shape and Figure from the reſt of the Paſſengers, ſaid, *Friend, thou haſt no Place here.* Immediately I found myſelf

ſelf on Shore, the Boat and Paſſengers gone, and the old Man by my Side. Theſe Things, ſaid he, do appear ſtrange to you, who are lately arrived. The Veſſel you ſaw came from Paradiſe; the Times of its coming in are quarterly, to convey the good Souls to that happy Place; the Number of thoſe who went you know. I here interrupted him by ſaying, No more than one hundred out of the many thouſands of different Nations, who have died in that Time! Why ſhould you be ſurprized, quoth he; the Scriptures ſay but few are to be ſaved. He went on, The Spirits who diſappeared upon the Sight of the Veſſel, are thoſe who are doomed to ſuffer; the Appearance of the Boat was the Occaſion of their retiring, as it reminded them of their paſt Follies, and the Deprivation and Loſs of that Bliſs and Happineſs which bleſſed Spirits enjoy. Thus diſcourſing I obſerved a Paper in his Hand; the Contents of it he was ſo kind as to read. The Part which will affect you is as follows, "Ordered, amongſt other Perſons, that no Clergyman ſhall be ſuffered "to eſcape unpuniſhed, who appears to "have been guilt of Simony; the buying "and ſelling any Living; the procuring "Preferment by voting at Elections; by

" making Preſents to a Lord's Lady, Steward,
" or any other Perſon, by whoſe Intereſt or
" Influence any Living may be obtained,
" to be looked upon and deemed within
" the Act." I ſend you this early Notice to prevent in you the Sufferings which I ſhall ſoon undergo. I thought it no Crime to have purchaſed a Living of two hundred a Year, for ſeven hundred Pounds; and many others are of the ſame Opinion, if I may judge from the frequent Sale and Purchaſe of Livings in Reverſion. What impious Prayers are offered up to Heaven, by the Purchaſer, to haſten the Death of the old Incumbent! With what Pleaſure is the glad News received when dead! What is a Sorrow to others, the Loſs of a good Man, affords Matter of Joy and Conſolation to the brutal Succeſſor, whoſe Merit and Abilities might never have raiſed him from the loweſt and meaneſt Station in the Church. His Lordſhip will find it more for his Intereſt hereafter to diſcharge his Debts of Honour, and expenſive Frolicks by other Methods, and the Parſon will find it not leſs beneficial to refuſe the Purchaſe. The Order in full will be ſent by the next Packet, with the Debates of the Council upon it. They are now engaged in re-examining

mining Simon Magus, that all Pretences, Excuſes, Evaſions, Equivocations, &c. may be prevented. After his Trial the Puniſhment to be inflicted upon thoſe, who have been, or ſhall be guilty of that infamous Practice, will be publiſhed.

Your's

A SIMONIAN.

LETTER XXVII.

To an Aſſiſtant CURATE.

YOUR Diſtreſs was, I remember, great; which I find to be greater, by the Increaſe of your Family, and the Loſs you received at my Death. Your Abilities, now buried in Obſcurity, through the Want of Friends to encourage, and Opportunities to diſplay them, will not be without a proper Reward here. Your Appearance is indeed mean and contemptible, and your Want of Preferment and extreme Poverty, have been hardly judged of; on Account of which you have been charged with Crimes of which you are innocent, more innocent than your baſe Accuſers, and the Authors of your Miſery and Diſtreſs. Thoſe who are better

read

read in human Nature know, that your Diſorders proceed not from an Exceſs *in any Thing*, but from the Want *of every Thing*. You are not afflicted with the Gout, Fever or an Inflammation: But your continual Faſtings, occaſioned by an abſolute Neceſſity, not as Matter of Duty or Choice, and an hungry Meal at beſt, with the diſmal and affecting Sight of your ſtarved and helpleſs Offspring, and the little Proſpect of doing any Thing for them, or bequeathing them (what whilſt living you with Difficulty procure) a neceſſary Subſiſtence, are the real, not pretended, Cauſes of what you feel and Suffer. You need no Exhortations to be patient in Adverſity, for you have learnt that Virtue from Experience. It muſt be a Concern to leave your Family deſtitute; but let it not be a Trouble and Uneaſineſs upon your Mind, ſince it is not your Fault but Misfortune, that you can make no better Proviſion for them. To the Care of an all-wiſe and good God commit them. Teach them that the beſt Remedy for the Calamities of Life is to bear them, according to your Example, with Patience and Reſignation: A few Years will put an End to your and their Troubles. Some Men have their Pleaſures in your World, and others

others their Sorrows; in this the latter are comforted, and the former tormented. Riches and Honour few enjoy, and for the Uſes they are put to, it is well that they are ſo confined. The Proprietors ſhould not have a Regard to ſelf alone, but be ready and willing at all Times to relieve the Wants of the Poor, whoſe Guardians they are: By expending Part of their Fortunes in this Manner, they purchaſe to themſelves an everlaſting Eſtate in Reverſion. Several Spirits lately met together, and diſcourſing about the Hardſhips of the inferior Clergy, we wondered that no Way had been found out to remove what were ſo generally known, and ſo generally complained of. It was ſaid that the Superior Clergy were too powerful; many of them were the younger Sons of great Families, for whom there was none other Proviſion than the Church or Army afforded: Some others had obtained Preferment by Services; and others had too much Intereſt and Influence to be diſobliged, by a Confinement to a ſingle Living, or compelled to give more than they ſhould chuſe. If the Civil Power could not apply a Remedy, Application, it was ſaid, ſhould be made to the Eccleſiaſtical. But there are

ſo

ſo many Connections, Obligations and Friendſhips, that thoſe in Authority cannot exerciſe it. All the Anſwer that could be expected from them was, that every Man ſhould make the beſt Bargain he can for himſelf. There were other Schemes propoſed, but not one appeared pacticable. After much Debate it was gravely ſaid, that they (that is the Curates) would never have more, unleſs they would be content to have leſs. The Propoſal ſeemed to be odd, but if complied with, Pluralities would be deſtroyed, or a more decent Proviſion made for Inferiors. The Meaning of it is, that the Curates ſhould unanimouſly agree, unleſs a Salary was given in Proportion to the Duty and Value of the Living, or the Fortune of the Incumbent, to leave at the ſame Inſtant of Time their Curacies. To this Scheme it was objected, that it could not be generally complied with, on account of the preſent Poverty and Diſtreſs of many, and others for want of Subſiſtence would ſoon be compelled to re-accept. To which it was judiciouſly anſwered, that as moſt of the ſuperior Clergy were poſſeſſed of Pluralities, and the Livings at ſuch a Diſtance that they could not perſonally diſcharge the Duties of both, they muſt be reduced to the

diſ-

disagreeable Alternative either of immediately complying with their Demands, or resigning up one of the Livings. As the Scheme pleased us, I was desired to communicate it to you, and we heartily wish, as it is useful and expedient, and cannot be deemed illegal and unreasonable, it may be soon put into Execution. It is hoped, that no one through Fear, or for the Sake of a few trifling Perquisites, will stand out or appear as Neuters. This, at present, is the best Remedy for your Grievances; if any other should appear, you may expect to have it by the next Packet.

Yours,

From Paradise.

A RECTOR.

LETTER

LETTER XXVIII.

To a FATHER.

Honoured Sir,

THE Hopes you had ſo long entertained, and the Prayers you had ſo frequently offered up for an Heir, who might inherit the Eſtate and Virtues of your Anceſtors, were, you thought, heard and gratifyed at my Birth. The Joy and Satisfaction then received were quickly ſucceeded by anxious Cares and Fears for your darling, but ſickly Offspring. Nothing was wanting which the Affection of the moſt tender Parents could procure to adminiſter Strength to the feeble and weak Conſtitution. But, alas! all Endeavours to ſave proved vain. To your inexpreſſible Grief and Sorrow, I died in my twentieth Year of a Conſumption, after having flattered you ſo long with the Conceit of a Recovery. The Cauſe of it you are a Stranger to, and you will be ſurpriſed to hear that the Seeds of this Diſeaſe were ſown in my Infancy; owing to the Neglect of one, whom you highly eſteem and value. I know that you will aſk, how this could have been; that one

one who had ſhewed ſo much Care of me when living, expreſſed ſo much Sorrow when dead, and ſtill laments and bewails the Loſs, ſhould have been the unhappy Author of this Misfortune to your Family. The Cauſe was the Obſervance of a certain Delicacy of Taſte, Humour, or Faſhion prevailing amongſt Ladies of high Birth and great Fortunes, and imitated by thoſe of inferior Rank and Condition, of deſerting or expoſing their Children as ſoon as born. They are too tender, too weak, too nice, too ſqueamiſh, too idle or too much devoted to Pleaſure, to become Nurſes, and therefore ſend them to ſuch, who have none other Affection for them than what ariſes from Intereſt; with whom the little helpleſs Innocents are pinched with Hunger, and frequently contract ſuch bad Habits of Body and Mind, as render their Lives unhappy and uncomfortable to themſelves, a Trouble and Uneaſineſs to their Friends and Relations. Has Providence been kind to all other Animals, in ſupplying them with Means and Strength to nouriſh their Young, and denied them to the moſt noble and faireſt Piece of its Workmanſhip? Shall Brutes teach the Fair to have a natural Affection for their Offspring, in the

the tender Care and concern they ſhew for the Preſervation of their own Species? Cannot they ſacrifice one Year's Dreſs and Gaiety for the good of Infants (for whom they lately ſuffered ſo much) when the Intereſt, Honour and Happineſs of their Families depend upon their Safety. What Satisfaction will Balls, Plays, and Viſits yield comparable to this? Can any Pleaſure, any Diverſion be ſo innocent and entertaining, which every fond Mother daily and hourly receives from the endearing Looks, Tricks and prattling Noiſe of their little Offspring? It is unknown how many ancient and worthy Families have been deprived of Heirs by this cruel and unnatural Practice; how numerous thoſe who, eſcaping my Fate, have lived, not to be an Honour and Ornament, but an Infamy and Diſgrace to their Parents. It may happen, that theſe Effects are not produced, but they are ſeldom avoided, ſince the Circumſtances of the Perſons made choice of for thoſe Purpoſes are mean; they are full of Care and Trouble how to provide for their own, have angry and cholerick Huſbands to pleaſe and humour, and are (few, if any, excepted) addicted to the pernicious Cuſtom of Dram-drinking. How is the

ſlow

ſlow but ſure Poiſon infuſed by Means, which the God of Nature deſigned to communicate Health and Strength to the tender Infant. How are ſpirituous Liquors given to remove Diſorders (rather to excuſe the Love of Drinking) for which Providence has furniſhed plain, eaſy and ſimple Medicines! Hence the many various Diſeaſes with which they are frequently affected from the State of Infancy to that of Youth; for which, few Remedies are found, few Cures made, as the great Number of thoſe who die under that Age ſhew. The Skill of the Phyſician is baffled, and the Application of Drugs rendered uſeleſs by Ailments unnatural, whoſe only Relief is in Death. You would be aſtoniſhed to ſee the Number of Infants continually arriving in theſe Parts, who having ſcarce breathed Exiſtence, through the Unkindneſs of the Parent, and the Intemperance of the Nurſe, have been ſo early deprived of Life: The Parents alſo not a little contributing thereto, by their frequent Uſe of Spirits and ſtrong Waters. From whence, as I have often heard you ſay, the weak and puny Offspring, and the Difference of the preſent from the laſt Age in Health, Strength and Stature. You did not then

think, that to this Vice was the Death of your Son owing, with many others, who had promiſed the ſame Happineſs to their Parents. The ſame Fate attends many more now living, and will be of many others yet unborn, till Mothers follow Nature and rear their own Offspring, or if, as it ſometimes, but rarely happens, that they are not able, let them ſeek for and procure ſober and temperate Nurſes. But Infants and Youth are not the only Perſons who fall a Sacrifice to this Vice; ninety out of a hundred of Adults are killed by it. This will not ſurpriſe, if you enquire into the vaſt Conſumption of ſtrong and ſpirituous Liquors; if you reckon up the Number of Taverns, public and licenſed Houſes in the great Metropolis, and neighbouring City and Borough, where Liquors are ſold; the many Gueſts each has, notwithſtand-they are numerous; and the large and eaſy Fortunes both Brewers and Diſtillers, Seller and Retailer ſoon acquire. Pleaſe to communicate this Letter to my Siſters, who may by it be perſuaded to lay aſide the faſhionable, and become the natural Mother. The Public, I think, ſhould likewiſe be acquainted with it, as it may be inſtrumental in preſerving many a noble Heir, and ſaving Thouſands of Infants from an

untimely

untimely End, who would be an Ornament and Strength to Society. This, Sir, we of this Place know to be true. Many a noble Peer, an honeſt Stateſman, an uncorrupt Judge, a pious Divine, a brave Soldier, a ſober Citizen, an induſtrious Artizan, &c. have been deſtroyed in their Infancy; which you are ſenſible muſt be a great and affecting Loſs to Society, as there are but few, very few ſuch now living; and I believe they have been in all Ages very ſcarce, ſince this Place is not crowded with them.

From Paradiſe.

Your affectionate Son.

LETTER XXIX.

To the Rev. Mr. ———.

THE Preferment I had in the Church was conſiderable. This ſingular Favour of Providence I entirely appropriated to the Indulgence of Self. I urged the Practice of Beneficence to all, but never adminiſtered to the Wants and Neceſſities of any. There was no Delicacy, which I

did not procure and regale myſelf and boon Companions with; being a Batchelor and having no Relations, I thought that I might be thus innocently free. I did not conſider, that as I was able, it was my Duty to have relieved and aſſiſted the Indigent and Neceſſitous, not revelled in Luxury and riotous Living, when many of my Flock were in Diſtreſs and Miſery; whoſe Lives, by a little Abſtinence, I could have made eaſy and comfortable. I ſhould have met with a better Reception in this World, if, inſtead of entertaining my rich Friends, I had followed the Advice of my Maſter, and called in the Poor, who could not have returned the Favour: And, in all Probability, the ſpending Part of my Income in this Manner would have prolonged my Life, as it would have prevented many Riots and much Exceſs; ſince the frequent Invitations of Friends not only ſhortened my Days, but were the real Cauſe of my Death. Good Fellowſhip paſſed very well in the other World as an Excuſe for Intemperance; but there is no palliating Vice here. Men appear what they really were, and your merry Souls are treated as mere Drunkards. You may remember that I was ſuddenly diſpatched by a Surfeit at Guildhall,

Guildhall, and I was ſcarcely recovered from it, when I entered this Place. The next Day, being Sunday, I was ordered to prepare for Trial. As I had many Infirmities, Lowneſs of Spirits, Fevers, Gout, &c. it was aſked, whether theſe Diſorders were occaſioned by a cloſe Attendance upon the Office of a Miniſter? You well know it to be the Reverſe; I, therefore, made no Reply. I was then aſked, whether I had never neglected any Duty for the Sake of Pleaſure, Company or Entertainment? To this Queſtion I was going to reply, when I heard, as it were, a Bell tolling for Morning Prayers, which brought to my Mind the ſeveral Omiſſions made for Head-aches got over Night; a Child came in, who had died unbaptized, I was that Morning a Fox-hunting; two Women appeared, who had departed without the Sacrament, at which Time I was ſolliciting a great Man for another Living; a young Woman approached, who was to be married the Morning I was ſeized with the Gout, after having drank nobly of French Claret, the Bridegroom, who was a Sailor, being preſſed the next Day; ſeveral poor Wretches, half naked and ſtarved, with a Number of little Children hanging about them, followed.

I ſoon found that my rigorous Exaction of Tythes and Fees, occaſioned by ſenſual Gratifications, had brought this Diſtreſs upon them. I acknowledged my Guilt, and retired. What Effect this Letter may have upon you, I know not; but be aſſured of this, that all the Mirth and Jollity, the ſplendid and elegant Entertainments, which I have been Partaker of, are not equivalent to one Day's Suffering.

From yours,

T. G.

LETTER XXX.

To the Rev. Mr. ———.

BEFORE I obtained any Preferment in the Church, you know how modeſt and humble I appeared. I then thought, like an honeſt Man, that Pluralities were illegal; and that every one ought to reſign a leſſer when a greater Preferment was obtained. But our Sentiments alter with our Circumſtances; and what was before unreaſonable, I afterward judged to be convenient.

venient. I then deſpiſed Wealth, becauſe I had it not, and railed againſt Pluraliſts, becauſe they poſſeſſed what I wanted to enjoy. When a Living of three hundred was given me, I had a Lectureſhip of fifty. Before I would have gladly relinquiſhed the one for the other; and I then thought it criminal in ſome Perſons to hold ſuch Trifles, after the ſame or better Acquiſitions. When I left the inferior Order, I found the Practice general; and I too readily came into it. I had the Examples of great and learned Divines before me. It was thought that a rich Parſon, near T—— B——r, upon having a few Hundreds added to what he before poſſeſſed, would have reſigned a trifling Lectureſhip: But when aſked, his Anſwer was, *he was greatly ſurpriſed to hear of ſuch a Report, having no ſuch Intention.* Another Divine, I find, ſtill continues to be terribly hipped, for having refuſed a Preferment, which his old Age and Infirmities made him to fear, that he ſhould not live long enough to receive Profits ſufficient to defray the uſual Expence attending it. Theſe are looked upon as Men of Merit; but in their Paſſage from the other World to this, it will be loſt; I ſpeak from the beſt Au-

thority, Experience. I was aſked, if I did not think the Living I had, before it was procured, to have been a ſufficient Maintenance, excluſive of Lectureſhip? I could not deny it. I was then aſked, why, upon obtaining the former, I did not give up the latter? To which I had the common Anſwer ready, that I was obliged to make a different Appearance; and therefore wanted it. But this Kind of pleading availed nothing. I was told, that I had ſecluded a more deſerving Man from a comfortable Subſiſtence, meerly to ſupport my Pride and Vanity; that I had compelled him, for the Sake of a Dinner, or the Fear of diſobliging, to ſacrifice his Character to the Mirth of Fools; and that I had exerciſed the ſame Inhumanity and Injuſtice, which, when in Want and Neceſſity, I had ſo frequently cenſured and condemned others for. I urged in Excuſe, that Curates, when they ſhould become Rectors and Vicars, would do the ſame Thing. It was replied, that though Complaints from ſuch Perſons might be unjuſt, yet the Plea would not ſerve; for the Guilt and Puniſhment of Sin would not be leſs, becauſe its Votaries are numerous; that I was not to

have

have conſidered what others would do, but what I ought to have done. I ſend you this Advice, that you may acquaint thoſe Rectors, who hold Curacies or Lecture-ſhips, or are conſtantly applying and ſolliciting for Gift Sermons, that it is their Duty now, as it will be their Reward hereafter, to leave thoſe Places and Trifles for the preſent Relief and Support of their neceſſitous and indigent Brethren and Families. Whether they will follow the Advice, I know not; but of this Truth they may be ſatisfied, of which a little Time will ſenſibly convince them, that the more moderate their Deſires, the lighter their Puniſhment will be here.

Yours, &c.

T. R.

LETTER

LETTER XXXI.

To a young Lady of FASHION.

My Dear,

WHAT I wrote to you on my Death-Bed, I have now experienced to be true. You attributed the prudent Advice I then gave, and the Sorrow I expreſſed for the paſt Gaieties and Pleaſures of Life, to my Diſorder and Lowneſs of Spirits; and was pleaſed to ſay, that I was rather ſerious and religious from Neceſſity than Choice. You had juſt Reaſon indeed to ſuſpect my Sincerity, ſince the Eſteem I had before ſhewed for Religion was merely formal, and my Devotions had been performed from a Regard to Decency, not from a Senſe of Duty. You are now in the Bloom and Beauty of Youth; it may be difficult, therefore, to perſuade you to be ſerious. But the Time will come, when you cannot amuſe, divert, nor ſtifle Reflection. At the laſt ſolemn Hour, when ſtanding on the Borders of Eternity, when all human Relief fails, the Application of Medicines

uſeleſs

uſeleſs, and the Skill of the Phyſician vain, what Comfort, what Conſolation will the Remembrance of Balls, Plays, Concerts, Operas, Maſquerades, Routs, &c. yield in your Affliction and Diſtreſs! How faint and languid will be your Hopes of Happineſs; how powerful and alarming, yet how true and juſt your Fears of Miſery! You will then apply for Eaſe to Religion; but, alas! what Eaſe can it afford to one, who has both in public and private treated it with Indifference and Contempt, and frequently uſed it as a Sanction to Witticiſms and Buffoonery. What Reſt to your troubled Conſcience can you expect from a God, whoſe Sabbath you have ſo often violated and prophaned by Routs, Gaming, &c. How will you then wiſh, but wiſh in vain, for the Return of that Time ſo profuſely laviſhed away in Dreſs, to procure the Eſteem and Reſpect of thoſe, whoſe Pity or Contempt you will ſoon be, as Age comes on, and new Beauties ariſe. Why ſhould you poſtpone theſe Conſiderations, 'till they they can be of no Uſe? Why ſhould you put off the Practice of what you will then highly approve, and condemn yourſelf for neglecting? Why ſhould you think of being religious, when you can receive no

Benefit

Benefit from ſuch Behaviour? I have often heard you ſay, that Religion is fit only for old Men and Women, who have no Taſte left, to whom Pleaſure is inſipid, and Company diſagreeable. Do you really believe, that Religion makes its Profeſſors dull, melancholy and unſociable? Practiſe it, and you will experience the Falſhood. It permits every Pleaſure that is innocent; it only prohibits ſuch as are injurious to the Conſtitution, and unworthy of a rational Being; it is no Enemy to Mirth and Humour, which is founded on good Senſe, and does not offend Morality: So far from inſtilling Dullneſs and Melancholy, that the truly religious, is the only happy and chearful Perſon. The Performance of Duty leaves no Upbraidings, no Uneaſineſs upon the Mind, nothing to be repented of; but the Neglect of it does, and will be the Occaſion, ſooner or later, of much Grief and Sorrow. Believe me, if religious, you would not be ſo much troubled with the Vapours, nor ſo often complain of the Tediouſneſs of Time, when you have no Rout to make, no Viſit to return, and no Pleaſure to take: You would no longer call the Sabbath an idle and uſeleſs Day, nor ſigh and grieve for the Suſpenſion

of

of the publick Diverſions; you would quit your Toilet to contemplate the amazing and ſtupendous Inſtances of the Power, the Wiſdom and Goodneſs of God in his various Diſpenſations; you would give up the Pleaſures of a Ball, a Play and Opera, for ſuch truly excellent and rational Entertainment; you would ſacrifice an Head Dreſs to the Relief of an honeſt but neceſſitous Family, and forſake the falſe Enjoyments of your, to ſecure the Joys of the next World. I know, my Dear, all this will be called preaching: But remember that it is preaching from the Dead; not by thoſe whoſe Profeſſion and Bread it is, as we uſed to term it. I can have no other Motive than your good, to prevent your Suffering what I am to endure. Forbear making a Jeſt of Things ſacred, and ſo live, that let Death viſit you early or late, ſuddenly or not, it may find you innocent. This is the ſincere Wiſh of the dear but unfortunate,

KITTY MODISH.

LETTER

LETTER XXXII.

Dear Friend,

YOU are no Stranger to the Misfortunes, which happened to me in the other World; you knew, pitied, but could not remove them. The Cauſe was my unhappy Choice in a Wife. After the Death of the good old Woman my Mother, I courted what is called an accompliſhed Perſon. Being in a large Way of Buſineſs, and worth Money, Conſent was ſoon obtained, and I was married. What Felicity did I then expect; and I began to reproach myſelf, that I had remained ſo long ſingle. But alaſs! the promiſed Felicity ſoon vaniſhed; a few Weeks ſhewed the Error, and Thought and Reflection came, but came too late. I was ſenſibly convinced, that I had been amuſed into Ruin by Externals, and mere Shew and Appearance had paſſed for real Worth and good Senſe. Her Gaiety, her Taſte and fine Accompliſhments, brought on a Loſs of Credit, and a Bankruptcy quickly followed. No ſooner had I

taken

taken her Home, but I saw my Weakness and Folly. As an ancient Citizen I desired her to take the Care and Management of the domestick Affairs: She turned from me with an Air and said, that *she did not marry to be my Housekeeper or Cook Maid.* A Month before her Travail I asked her, which Room she designed for her Nursery. *A Nursery!* she cried: *O! the Brute*, and fainted. When recovered, addressing herself to Mrs. Midnight, *Madam*, said she, *my Mother, who had fifteen Children, never nursed nor dressed one; and she had a much less Fortune than myself. What an intolerable Thing it is to be wedded to a low Life vulgar Fellow*; and fainted again. One Time I bid *her* little Master (for you must understand, that she never called the Children mine) to fetch some Fuel for the Fire: *Fetch it yourself, Booby*, said she; *would you spoil the Child's Hand, and make him as great a Clown as yourself?* In short, I never said or did any thing she liked; we were a Trouble and Uneasiness to each other, always dissatisfied, and never better pleased than when out of Sight. My Substance being in a few Years lavished away in Balls, Concerts, Plays, Operas, Visits, Dress, Equipage, &c. we parted both by Necessity and Choice, being

ing ſufficiently tired with each other's Company. She went home to her Father's, and I was ſoon ſent to Goal, where I ſurvived my Misfortunes but a few Days. Had a prudent and diſcreet Woman fallen to my Lot, her Carefulneſs and Oeconomy would have improved my Fortune; or, if by any Accidents, to which Trade is expoſed, I had been reduced, her innate Goodneſs, her Piety would have ſoothed and ſoftened my Troubles, enabled me to have borne them with a becoming Decency and Reſolution, and made me happy in the Enjoyment of the little I ſhould have had left. But the other was only made to baſk in the Sunſhine of Proſperity; and when the black Cloud of Adverſity hung over my Head, was full of Complaints and Murmurings, not to ſay, Upbraidings. This ungenerous Return now appears to have been rather her Misfortune, than Fault; the Effect of the Parents Folly and Weakneſs in an improper Education. What has a Citizen's Daughter, whoſe Portion is ſmall, and whoſe future Subſiſtence is to be drawn from Labour and Induſtry, to do with the Education of an Heireſs? Yet Miſs muſt be taught the French Tongue, to ſing, to dance, to play upon Inſtruments of Muſick, to receive

Company, to have her viſiting Days, Routs and Card-Tables; to follow the various Modes and Faſhions of Dreſs; to be every Thing that a Woman of Quality is, without a Fortune or Purſe to ſupport it. What leſs than the Eſtate of a Duke can maintain this Taſte and Politeneſs? How then can the Poverty, Fraud, Diſhoneſty and Bankruptcies, you frequently ſee and hear of, ſurpriſe? Nor need it appear ſtrange, that amongſt other baſe and illegal Practices, Proſtitution ſhould ſo much prevail, which is followed to uphold the genteel and faſhionable Breeding, which the Parent gave, but could not maintain. What Miſery would have been prevented, what Happineſs enjoyed, if their Education had been agreeable to their Fortunes, and the Station of Life they were by Providence undoubtedly deſigned to fill! Then you would not ſee the Daughters of little Tradeſmen putting on and aſſuming the Air and State of a Dutcheſs, but ſhewing the Fondneſs of a Mother in nurſing their own Offspring, and the Prudence of a Wife in managing and conducting the Family Affairs with Oeconomy and Frugality. Then the Induſtrious would not be defrauded of their Right and Property, to ſupport their Extravagance;

nor an innocent Offspring expoſed to Poverty and Want, to maintain their Gaiety and Pleaſure; nor themſelves reduced to Beggary, or compelled to procure Subſiſtence by Violence and Diſhoneſty.

From Paradiſe. Yours,

An unfortunate CIT.

REMARKS

REMARKS

ON THE

AUTHORITY, &c.

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REMARKS

ON THE

AUTHORITY

Which the Church of ENGLAND claims in her ARTICLES and CANONS.

THE Diſputes and Controverſies which are in the Church, concerning Matters of Faith and Diſcipline, have been the Concern of all good and pious Men. The Miſchiefs which they have produced, and will ſtill produce, if continued and encouraged, ſhould incline and diſpoſe us to think with Temper and Soberneſs, and endeavour to compoſe and ſettle them. The original Cauſe of them

ſeems to have been the Vanity of learned Men, who claimed to themſelves the ſole Privilege of interpreting Scripture; whom, as Followers increaſed, from a Reputation of their extenſive Learning and great Piety, the Civil Power being gained over to their Side, others were obliged to follow, or ſuffer for the Refuſal.

This was not leſs the Practice of other Churches than of Rome, before it was corrupted: And has it not been imitated by the Reformed? They complained againſt the arbitrary and illegal Impoſitions of the Papal See, and their Complaints were juſt; but was not Obedience to their Principles exacted with Rigour and Severity? The People, to ſhew their Reſentment againſt Popery, at firſt readily ſubmitted, not apprehenſive of the Conſequences: But when the Dread of Popery ſubſided, and there was no Danger of ſuffering Martyrdom for Hereſy, they began to make Uſe of their Freedom and Liberty. Upon Examination, they found that they had exchanged the Traditions for (what they termed) the Impoſitions of Men: So that, from thinking they could not be ſufficiently guarded againſt the Corruptions and Abuſes of Rome, Proteſtants

teſtants were unhappily divided amongſt themſelves.

The principal Cauſe of our Diſſentions was an Abhorrence of Popery; which naturally produced a Diſlike for any Rite, Ceremony, or Form of Diſcipline, that had been uſed in, or adopted by that Church. It muſt be acknowledged, that Zeal got the better of Reaſon and Diſcretion; for Things abuſed, when purged from their Abuſes, may be innocently complied with. Notwithſtanding, the Error ſeems to be pardonable, when we conſider the Slavery, Tyranny and Oppreſſion, which the Chriſtian World had long ſuffered from the See of Rome. They thought (and did they think unreaſonably?) that Men ſhould not be denied the Benefits of Church Communion or the Privileges of a Subject, be anathematized or excommunicated, for entertaining different Sentiments of ſome Things, if uſeful and good, which could lay Claim to none other Authority, than what was founded on fallible Interpretations of the ſacred Writings. Without derogating from the Learning and Abilities of the Impoſers, may they not have been miſtaken? though the Manner in which Subſcription is demanded, and the Cenſures inflicted upon

thoſe who refuſe, ſeem to favour of Infallibility.

A falſe Diſcipline and Mode of Worſhip may be eſtabliſhed by Miſrepreſentations and injudicious Determinations of Scripture. This is true of the Church of Rome; to whom Obedience has been paid and ſecured, from a Fear of incurring Civil Puniſhments, and by prohibiting and forbidding any Doubts, Diſputes or Controverſies concerning the Reſolutions and Decrees of the Church. It is no Wonder, therefore, that the Errors and Abſurdities propagated were embraced, when free Enquiry was prohibited, and Men were compelled to think and ſpeak as Mother Church directed. Hence Things indifferent were made obligatory upon Conſcience, and Chriſtianity became the Sanction of impious Doctrines and ridiculous Traditions.

That the Church cannot err, is a ſlaviſh Maxim, and derogates much from the Credit and Veracity of the ſacred Writings, ſince it puts human Weakneſs and Imperfection upon an Equality with divine Truth. Is it Chriſtian Liberty to yield Aſſent, without enquiring, whether the Thing required to be believed or received, is worthy of Belief or Reception? He may be deemed a

Friend

Friend of the Church, who thus gives up his Underſtanding; and he may be accounted its Enemy, who does not; but certainly he is not the better Man, for neglecting the Uſe of thoſe Powers, which the Author of Nature hath implanted in him, nor the better Chriſtian for not examining into the Fitneſs and Propriety of human Preſcriptions and Deciſions, when it is expreſſly required as Part of his Duty. In reſpect of Temporal Intereſt, it may be imprudent to make the Enquiry.

Is not Subſcription required at a Time, when Men have little or no Acquaintance with the controverſial Writings of either Party? Can it then be ſuppoſed, that they rightly underſtand what they ſet their Hands to? Though, if they read the Articles, &c. yet they dare not make uſe of their Reaſon and Underſtanding; ſince, according to the Preamble before them, they muſt receive and acknowledge them to be true. I do not inſinuate, that they are falſe and erroneous; but as much hath been, and may be ſaid on both Sides, I think, with Submiſſion, that as Eccleſiaſtical Laws ſhould be conformable to Reaſon and Scripture, ſo they ſhould be ſupported by the ſame Powers, not by inflicting Cenſures or Puniſhments

ments upon thoſe, who only differ in Opinion, but are, in all other Reſpects, good Men and good Chriſtians. Such Treatment belongs to another State and another Judge, who beſt, and indeed only knows, who is right and wrong, who, it is probable, may not concern himſelf with, nor puniſh either Party for mere Opinions.

But are Articles and Canons of no Uſe? They are: I am not pleading for an Abolition. But Chriſtians would be more eaſily united, if the damnatory and excommunicatory Clauſes were omitted; nor would Men be ſcrupulous in ſubſcribing, if they were permitted to underſtand them in their own Senſe. No unreaſonable Requeſt, for they contain many Points, that have been for many Centuries, and may remain to the laſt Period of Time, undetermined.

Is a Synod, or Convocation of Engliſh Divines, more holy and pious, leſs liable to Error and Deception, than general Councils were in ancient Times? Can it be affirmed, that they were under the peculiar Guidance and Direction of the Holy Spirit? Alas! the Diſputes and Animoſities, which prevailed both within and without Doors, will convince the candid and unprejudiced Enquirer after Truth of the Reverſe: That the

the Weakneſs and Frailty of Man too much prevailed over the Meekneſs and Gentleneſs of the Spirit. The Compilers of the Articles ſeem to be of the ſame Opinion, not only in allowing, that they were liable to Error, but that in ſome Things they had been miſtaken. That a Convocation of Engliſh Divines is more infallible, is not to be granted, unleſs it can be proved, that they had more of Inſpiration.

It may be ſaid, does it not appear to be reaſonable and juſt, that the Holy Spirit ſhould aſſiſt, where the Honour and Interſt of Chriſtianity are ſo highly concerned; when Rules for the Government and Diſcipline of the Church are to be made, and the Subſtance of the Chriſtian Faith is to be explained? For the latter, the Aſſiſtance of the Holy Spirit is not wanted, it being plainly delivered in the Scriptures: And if Men had been content with Citations from it, and laboured leſs in their Comments upon it, Chriſtians would, in Matters of Faith, have been more united, and their Underſtandings leſs diſturbed: For there could have been no reaſonable Plea againſt Union. All Men may be brought to believe in Doctrines plainly revealed and ſet forth in the Scriptures, but never will acknowledge

knowledge human Expoſitions arbitrarily impoſed by Perſons, who cannot pretend to a ſuperior Degree of Merit, either of Piety, Learning or Ability.

Church Government and Diſcipline ſhould be ſo ordered, as to comprehend all Proteſtants, and be offenſive, if it was poſſible, to none; but Excommunications for rejecting Things allowed and acknowledged to be indifferent, ſhould be avoided and omitted. It may be ſaid, that the Rites and Ceremonies are few, decent and becoming. But do they not appear to be more than ſhould be? if not, from whence ſpring theſe Diſſentions and Diviſions amongſt Proteſtants? Think not that they proceed from a Love of Wrangling and a Spirit of Oppoſition. Some Men, indeed, may be attached to this or that Party, for the Sake of acquiring Power or Intereſt.: And are no ſuch Perſons to be found in the Church? But there are good Men in all Parties, who are not actuated by thoſe mean and inglorious Motives, who as much claim our Regard, as the others merit our Contempt. If, then, there may be ſome Cuſtoms retained and obſerved by us, which we look upon as indifferent, the Uſe or Forbearance of which having no real Merit or Demerit, what ſo unrea-

unreaſonable or unjuſt in the Requeſt to alter or cancel them, what ſo imprudent or unchriſtian to yield to and comply with it?

It may be ſaid, that they will not ſtop here, but endeavour to have all Forms, their own excepted, aboliſhed. This the Zealots of the Party may ſtrive to accompliſh, who, like the Church Zealots, are for giving up nothing, and always inſiſting upon their own Terms: Both of whom, whatever they profeſs to know, practiſe little of Chriſtianity; and in the Opinion of the ſober and prudent, ſhould be treated as Lunaticks, whoſe only Fears are, that the Church ſhould have too much, and the Meeting any Power, and their Temporalities ſuffer. The Generality of Men, who are either weak or ignorant, unable or unwilling to judge for themſelves, are impoſed upon and deceived, and admit their Noiſe and Clamour, that the Church would be in Danger, or Conſcience be oppreſſed, for Reaſon and Argument. But the moderate of both Parties, who are already agreed in Sentiments, a few Obſtructions being removed, would ſoon come to an Accommodation; and the others, notwithſtanding the ſo much boaſted Zeal, would

ſoon

ſoon follow the Example, to preſerve their Power and Intereſt.

It cannot be proved, that any Thing human is ſo perfect, as to ſtand in no Need of Emendations. Perfection is only peculiar to Revelation. Time and Neceſſity occaſion many Changes and Alterations. Cuſtoms and Ceremonies obſerved and practiſed in one Age, are laid aſide and diſuſed in another, not being neceſſary nor convenient. The reviſing or rejecting any Thing received from ancient Times, or what our Anceſtors have invented for our Uſe and Service, and hath been tranſmitted to us, is no Reflection upon their Wiſdom or Judgment; unleſs it can be ſhewn, what the warmeſt Advocate will not aſſert, that they had effectually guarded againſt future Contingencies, and were inſpired. They had Parts and Ingenuity, and their Writings merit Attention; but they are not to be implicitly received, nor their Rules and Directions implicitly followed. If then by a few Alterations made in thoſe Things, which have not the Sanction of Divine but Human Authority, many Chriſtians would be happily united, and Chriſtianity ſerved by promoting Harmony and Charity, inſtead

of

of Strife and Variance amongſt Chriſtians, amongſt Proteſtants of the ſame Nation and Kindred, (the Deſign and Intention of making Eccleſiaſtical Laws) what ſhould hinder the Execution?

What is the Proteſtant Liberty, ſo frequently talked of? Amongſt other Advantages received by the Reformation, this is reckoned not the leaſt, the free Uſe of the ſacred Writings. But is this Uſe real or pretended? What is the Difference between Papal Uſurpation and Proteſtant Liberty? The Pope locks up the Scriptures, the Church confines the Underſtanding: With both the Church is to be implicitly believed, or elſe Rack and Tortures are brought forth for the refractory and diſobedient by the one, Excommunications, *&c.* thundered out by the other. The one not ſo terrible indeed to endure, yet very affecting in its Conſequences; and what it might be imagined, would not be permitted in a Country, where the People are remarkable for a tender Diſpoſition, not only to the good and worthy, but even to thoſe, whoſe Sufferings are juſt, owing to their Deſerts. Is it not, to ſay the leaſt of it, ungenerous and inhuman to condemn or puniſh for ſpeculative Notions, ſuch as are found to be obſcure

ſcure, doubtful and ambiguous in the ſacred Writings? How abſurd and ridiculous to require Men to believe and practiſe, what appears to be conſonant and agreeable to Scripture, when they are debarred and denied the Privilege of judging of it by Scripture?

In the Goſpel how few are the Articles of Faith! Yet how have they been enlarged and multiplied by general Councils and Synods, which have proved little better than general Evils. They rather encouraged than weakened the Cauſe, which they were aſſembled to condemn; and from the Feuds, Quarrels and Contentions they produced, the Clergy parted worſe Chriſtians and greater Enemies to each other, than they were before they met; and by the Diſtreſſes and Perſecutions, which the ſtronger inflicted upon the weaker Party, they expoſed Chriſtianity to Contempt and Ridicule, and made themſelves the Jeſt of the leſs knowing but more charitable Pagan in ancient Times, and the Pity of the more ſenſible and underſtanding Chriſtian in theſe Days.

Is the Church of England leſs infallible than the Church of Rome? Is implicit Faith leſs an Act of Obedience, or leſs inſiſted on now, than before the Reformation?

tion? Why then is it ſtrictly enjoined, not *to ſay, teach, or preach any Thing contrary to the Articles, &c.* Why is it required, that they ſhould not be interpreted in any other Senſe, but what is literal, and that Senſe not to be our own? If theſe are not, what are the Doctrines of Infallibility and implicit Faith? Are the Matters required to be believed and practiſed, true and conſonant to the Word of God? What need then of Reſtrictions and Prohibitions? Can the Cauſe of Truth receive any Injury from the moſt rigid Examination? If they are not, why ſhould they be maintained and defended? Every Chriſtian has a Right to enquire and examine into the Credit and Authority of the Goſpel; why not the Injunctions and Decrees of the Church? Are they more ſacred? It may not be impertinent to obſerve, that any one may, without expoſing himſelf to any temporal Inconveniences, interpret a Paſſage of Scripture contrary to the general and received Reading and Meaning, but not with the ſame Freedom and Safety an Article of the Church.

If the Authors and Compilers of theſe Articles were liable to Error and Miſtake, (and who will ſay, that they were not?) is it doing any Injuſtice to their Shades to

examine the Reaſonableneſs and Authority of what they have impoſed? Is it not our Duty ſo to do, leſt we ſhould be impoſed upon or deceived, and led to acknowledge that for divine Truth, which may have had none other Foundation than human Wit, Conceit or Prejudice? They had Learning and Abilities, and ſo had many of the ancient Fathers; but an immoderate and untempered Zeal for Orthodoxy has carried both too far, has been the Occaſion of not a few Miſtakes, of much Diſturbance, of more Diſſention in the Church, and been productive of violent Perſecutions.

Chriſtianity hath greatly ſuffered by ſpeculative Opinions. Parties have been formed, and Enmities cheriſhed and encouraged, becauſe Men would not receive arbitrary Determinations in thoſe Points, of which the Impoſers had no ſure and certain Knowledge; therefore they ſhould only have propoſed, not demanded, Acceptance. To mention the Articles concerning original Sin, Predeſtination, and Election, which have been Subjects of great Controverſy, and will, in all Probability, ſo remain; there are ſeveral Paſſages in Scripture which agree with the Senſe of the Articles upon thoſe Subjects: But it muſt be acknow-

knowledged, that there are not wanting others, which ſeemingly contradict it. Some therefore have admitted, and others have rejected them; both, it is to be charitably hoped, from a commendable Zeal for the Intereſt of Chriſtianity, leſt it ſhould be thought to maintain or countenance any Thing that might be conſtrued injurious to the Wiſdom, the Goodneſs, or the Juſtice of God. But however different their Sentiments in theſe curious and abſtruſe Matters, yet the Neceſſity of a Redeemer, of good Works and Faith in Chriſt, are by both acknowledged, approved, and recommended. And it ſhould not be concealed, that theſe oppoſite and contradictory Opinions have been maintained and defended by Perſons remarkable for their Piety and Learning. The Paſſages of Scripture, which are quoted in Defence and Support of theſe Opinions, are inconſiſtent; they may be reconciled, but it muſt be acknowledged, that they have their Difficulties. Is the Scripture then clear in theſe Points? The voluminous Tracts that have been publiſhed prove the Reverſe: If it had, theſe different Opinions would not have commenced ſo ſoon, nor have continued ſo long in the Church. If Chriſt, then, and his Apoſtles have not ſettled, can any one uninſpired abſolutely de-

termine them? Can any human Authority peremptorily fix, what is, and muſt be, by all moderate Men, confeſſed to be ambiguouſly delivered? We may approve either Opinion, but with Submiſſion, ſhould condemn neither: Who is right or wrong, will be known hereafter; but right or wrong, mere Opinions, if we are careful to execute our Lord's Commands, will be forgiven. They are Subjects out of the Reach of the human Underſtanding; the Knowledge of which may make Part of the Reward of bleſſed Spirits in another State. Some Men have made it Hereſy to read *o* for *os*, &c. and have damned Mankind, perhaps, for an Error of the Tranſcriber, or a Corruption of the Text; but the Sentence, it is hoped, will not be ratified in Heaven. It is a nice and difficult Matter to ſpeak concerning thoſe Articles in a Manner not offenſive, which may not be inconſiſtent either with the Doctrines of Free Will and Human Liberty, or the divine Attributes. It is, therefore, the moſt prudent, neither too curiouſly to explore, nor too confidently to determine concerning them.

Article the ſixth, ſaith, *Holy Scripture containeth all Things neceſſary to Salvation; ſo that whatſoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any Man,*

Man, that it ſhould be believed as an Article of Faith, or be thought requiſite, or neceſſary to Salvation. Article the twentieth, concerning the Authority of the Church, ſaith, *That it is not lawful for the Church to ordain any Thing, that is contrary to God's Word written, neither may it ſo expound one Placeof Scripture,* that it be *repugnant to another.* Hath not every one, therefore, the Liberty, who has an Ability, to enquire into the Conſiſtency of the Articles with the Scriptures? If they require nothing to be received and admitted, but what is plainly and clearly warranted by it, is it not fit, before it is received and admitted, to compare it with them? Article the nineteenth ſaith, *That the Church of Hieruſalem, Alexandria, Antioch and Rome have erred.* And may not the Church of England err, or if it better pleaſes, be miſtaken? The Church hath aſſerted, that its Articles are conſiſtent with Scripture; but how is this Conſiſtency to be known, unleſs by comparing one with the other? If, upon the Compariſon, a Likeneſs and Agreement do not appear, is not the Obligation to receive them void, or can it be reaſonably demanded of ſuch to receive them? Does it then ſeem juſt and equitable to exclude Perſons out of the

Church for uſing a Liberty, which the Church hath allowed them? Perſons whoſe Learning would have been of Service to it, if it had employed them, whoſe exemplary Lives, and ſtrict Virtue have been an Honour and Ornament to their Profeſſion, and their excellent Writings have fully and ſolidly proved the Neceſſity, Uſefulneſs and Reaſonableneſs of the Chriſtian Religion, to the no ſmall Terror and Confuſion of Infidelity.

When was any civil Law ſo perfect, or ſo abſolutely eſtabliſhed, as not to admit of a Repeal or Amendment? In no State or Empire of Note, but the Medes and Perſians, whoſe Example none choſe to copy; for this ſimple Reaſon, becauſe human Knowledge is ſcanty and imperfect, cannot diſcover all the Inconveniences, which may ariſe to the Subject; which are to be known only by Time and Experience, and which, though uſeful in one Age, have been reverſed in the next. Should not the ſame Prudence and Moderation appear in the making and ordaining Eccleſiaſtical Laws? For the Church neither claims, nor has Perfection.

To the Candid and Unprejudiced, it may be ſaid, the Articles, &c. muſt appear to be excellent,

excellent, juſt and good; and therefore what every good and pious Man will ſubſcribe. But have there been no good and pious Men, who have refuſed Subſcription? Had they not as much Learning, and as little Prejudice as thoſe, who have ſubſcribed? The Motive that induced the one to ſubſcribe, and the other to refuſe Subſcription, was the ſame, *a Regard for the Honour of Religion and their Conſcience.*

There are many popular Clamours raiſed and encouraged againſt theſe Men, and their Plea of Conſcience has been termed a Cloak for Iniquity. But Calumny and Slander are the Inſtruments, which Zealots uſe to propagate their own Opinions, and confute their Adverſaries; and though illiberal and diſingenuous in Men of Letters, and contrary to the loving and charitable Temper which is juſtly allowed to be the diſtinguiſhing Mark of Chriſtianity, it has been the Cuſtom ever ſince the Apoſtolical Age for one Party to traduce and miſrepreſent the Characters of the oppoſite Party. This Behaviour hath always had the intended Effect upon weak and little Minds, in keeping up a Spirit of Malevolence and Contradiction, and has been the Sanction of the

ſeveral Oppreſſions and Perſecutions recorded in Eccleſiaſtical Hiſtory.

What the Pagan alledged in Excuſe for the Barbarities exerciſed upon the Chriſtian, was the Plea uſed to excuſe the Degradations, Fines, Impriſonments, Baniſhment and Death, which the cruel Zealot inflicted upon an innocent, if miſtaken Brother, pretended Impieties and Immoralities. The Maxim being uſeful was adopted, and the Example imitated by ſucceeding Ages. But it is hoped, that will no more prevail to the Diſgrace of Chriſtianity, and the ſtanding Jeſt of the Infidel.

Moderation ſeems to gain ground: Party Diſtinctions are fading, Animoſities ſubſiding, and Men of different Opinions and Perſuaſions are not aſhamed of being known to and converſing with each other, of receiving and returning Acts of Kindneſs and Civility. In their Writings they behave like Gentlemen and Chriſtians, the cenſorious and opprobious Language of former Times being almoſt laid aſide. I know the Friends of Moderation are ſtigmatized, but unjuſtly, as the Enemies of the eſtabliſhed Church. What the Term Orthodoxy was in ancient Times, the eſtabliſhed Church now is, the Bugbear with which Zealots terrify

terrify the Weak and Ignorant, and make them believe, that to offer Conceſſions to Diſſenters, is doing an Injury to the Church and hurting the Conſtitution: But the Reverſe is true; and Hiſtory will confirm the Truth of the following Obſervation, that the more People are united in religious Sentiments, the greater will be the Peace and Order of the State. Whatſoever produces Harmony and good Nature amongſt Mankind, can be of no Prejudice to public or private good, nor any Diſadvantage to the Cauſe of Chriſtianity.

Is the public good promoted and advanced by theſe Differences? Does private Property ſuffer no Injury, or does it receive any Advantage from their Continuance? What Partiality in Trade! How is Buſineſs confined within our own particular Sect! By having Dealings with any of a contrary Perſuaſion, a Man has oftentimes riſked, ſometimes forfeited his Credit and Reputation. A Name with many has been the only Objection againſt, and to others the greateſt Recommendation to Favour and Eſteem. How many have been excluded from Places of Profit and Truſt, and others of ſlender Abilities and leſs Merit been preferred before them, becauſe they have ſpoken

of

of the Errors and Miſtakes of their Chriſtian Brethren with Temper and Candour: But Men of Senſe are now aſhamed of this ridiculous Conduct, and the Populace will find it more for their Intereſt not to encourage it.

The Church, it may be ſaid, is a Society; and Laws are neceſſary for the Eſtabliſhment and Preſervation of Order and Government; without them all would be Anarchy and Confuſion. The Word Church is not to be underſtood in a limited Senſe, but comprehends all Chriſtians of whatever Denomination, who endeavour to act agreeably to the Goſpel Morality, however they may differ in ſpeculative Points, Points not clearly and plainly revealed. The Laws made, whether they reſpect Matters of Faith, Practice, or Modes of Worſhip and Diſcipline, ſhould be ſuch as would oblige many, and exclude few. Have we found this Succeſs in our Church? Are there no Diviſions? Are we all of one Mind? Do we all think the ſame Thing? The contrary is well known. This, it is ſaid, is owing rather to a perverſe and obſtinate Humour, than to any Defect and Imperfection in the Laws. Whatſoever may have been the Cauſe of this Diſagreement,

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it must be confessed, that in their Lives and Writings, many of them who dissent from it, have appeared to no Disadvantage to Christian Piety and Humility.

I do not insinuate, that Laws are unnecessary; but as nothing human is allowed to be perfect, they should not be absolute. They were designed, when made, to guard against the Corruptions of Rome, and to reconcile Men to the Church; but they have not produced those Effects, and in all Probability never will. As an Union is what all prudent and good Men wish to see, would it be amiss to have them revised? Is the Time improper, when the ruling Powers of each Party are Men of Learning and Moderation, not employed as heretofore in reviling and caluminating, railing and exclaiming against each other's Person and Character, nor the Pulpit prostituted to serve those mean and shameful Purposes, but in recommending and enforcing Christian Virtue and Piety.

This seems to shew, that an Union is not, as some have imagined it to be, impossible: But some Concessions must be made. To have their Approbation in some Things, it cannot be unreasonable to grant their Requests in others; for as it is not to

be

be thought, that they will admit all the Injunctions of the Church, ſo neither will they reject all. But whether it is as prudent as it is reaſonable to make the Experiment; whether it is as politic, as it is Chriſtian, to attempt an Union, let others determine. But whether it is attempted or not, let us, however we may diſagree in religious Sentiments, be ready to do all good Offices to each other, and love as Brethren.

AN

AN
APOLOGY
FOR THE
CONDUCT
OF THE
SUPERIOR CLERGY.

AN

APOLOGY

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WHEN I wrote the following Apology, I had no Intention of making it publick, but finding the good Effect it had upon a private Communication, I thought by that Means it would be more extenſive. As their ſacred Perſons have been long expoſed to Calumny and Contempt, and Religion has not a little ſuffered on that Account, for which they have, even their moſt inveterate Enemies allow it, the

the higheſt external Regard and Veneration, the Deſign cannot be unacceptable.

No Vindication having appeared in their Favour, has made ſome weak, but honeſt Chriſtians to imagine, that their Characters are indefenſible. But who was to undertake it? To defend their own Cauſe, tho' in itſelf juſt and reaſonable, would be deemed prejudiced, and the Defence, if read, would not be regarded. I have therefore undertaken it, entirely unprejudiced, being of the Party aggrieved, and well qualified, having been long acquainted with the popular Clamours raiſed and encouraged againſt them; not to mention my Impartiality in giving the Objections their full Weight and Force, which Circumſtance will, I hope, occaſion the Reply to be well received.

I moſt earneſtly deſire, if they ſhould read this Apology, that they would not openly applaud nor commend it; becauſe ſuch a Conduct will naturally create Prejudices againſt it, as it may be then thought, that it was performed at their Requeſt.

The Stile indeed is low, but not improper. The Objections obviated have moſtly prevailed amongſt the lower Claſs of People, who have not Leiſure to peruſe, nor Genius to

to underſtand an elegant Compoſition. There are ſome whoſe Anger and Reſentment I ſhall have Reaſon to fear: But, I hope, the great Services I have done them, will move them to reſcue me out of their Hands, and convince them and the World, that they will never deſert their true Friends.

A late Commentator, in his Preface, has ſaid ſome Things not well pleaſing to them: An Anſwer to which was attempted by an Apologiſt. But their known Contempt of worldly Pomp and Wealth, ſufficiently confutes the one, and their Candor and Impartiality, in judging of Things wrote in their Favour, will prevent them from being impoſed upon, and deceived by the ſpecious Reaſoning of the other. The former ſeems to have wrote againſt them out of Pique and Reſentment, becauſe his Hopes of Preferment may have been diſappointed; and the latter is prejudiced in their Behalf, becauſe, by his Apology, he may expect his Hopes of Preferment to be gratified.

The ſame cannot be objected to their preſent Apologiſt. I have loſt no Preferment, and never courted any. What I have had, I have enjoyed with Content, and whatever Addition was received, it was

unexpected. I neither write for, nor fear the Loſs of Temporal Intereſt. If I have it, welcome; if I have it not, I am not deceived. I truſt therefore, that you will allow me to be better qualified to vindicate their Characters than any other Apologiſt; and theſe Profeſſions will incline their Enemies to read this little Piece with Candor, may diſpoſe them for the future to treat them with Reſpect, if they will not believe all that I have ſaid to be true, and to think that if they are not ſo good as they ſhould be, they are not ſo bad as they have been repreſented.

It would be weak to imagine, that all Clamours againſt them will, by this Apology, be ſilenced, or future Invectives prevented; but I promiſe in an enſuing Work*, that every Complaint, which hath been or ſhall in the mean Time be thrown out againſt them, either from the Preſs or the Pulpit, from Newſmongers or Pamphleteers, will be fully and carefully anſwered; which will be communicated to the Publick, as ſoon as the Collection of Examples of their Beneficence, &c. can be completed. In which I hope for their Aſſiſtance, not willing to rely upon the Credit and Veracity of the Inferior Clergy, who may through Fear or Deſign

* The Life of a Curate, with Prints.

Deſign conceal or miſrepreſent Facts. By this Means their Adverſaries will be ſooner ſilenced: Even their R——— W———, J——'s, &c. will be aſhamed of themſelves, and not able to ſpeak one Word more againſt them.

I muſt here favour the Commentator, becauſe it is to do them Juſtice, in ſaying that he was miſtaken, when he inſinuates, that they would all go to ———, he certainly meant P——y. Their moſt ſevere and bitter Enemies will not ſure allot them ſo hard a Fate. Conſidering the Millions of Souls their conſtant and laborious Preaching ſaves, they deſerve not to feel the Extremity of Pain, if for their private Faults they cannot enjoy the higheſt Degree of Happineſs.

It is certain, that they cannot be included amongſt the Number of thoſe miſerable Wretches, notwithſtanding what he or others may ſay or think, who make a Gain of Godlineſs, nor amongſt thoſe whom St. James ſpeaks of *. For allowing that they are rich, &c. it is well known, that they never keep back the Hire of their Labourers; for the Agreement they make with them is faithfully diſcharged, though they

* Chap. v.

may not have what their Labours deſerve. In which it is evident, that they can be guilty of no Fraud or Injuſtice, ſince every one has an undoubted Right to diſpoſe of his own Property.

As there is Reaſon to ſuſpect, that the Invectives daily thrown out againſt the Superior Clergy, are at the Inſtigation of the Gibeonites or inferior Clergy, Perſons contemptible and inconſiderable; I ſhould be glad of knowing what they mean or aim at, by authoriſing and countenancing theſe Clamours, againſt Men remarkable for their Virtues and Abilities? The Wealth and Power, which they poſſeſs, are the juſt Rewards of Merit. Is it Pride or Ambition that has moved and lifted them up? If they think, that they are entitled to the ſame Favours, let them firſt deſerve them. If they covet their Honours, they muſt by the ſame Methods endeavour to procure them, by learned Writings, conſtant and laborious Preaching. But if they have neither Genius nor Inclination for ſuch Things, let them be content in the Station which Providence has allotted them. Let a City Lectureſhip be the utmoſt of their Ambition; never let them ſeek for Rectories, Prebendaries, &c. for they have not

Parts

Parts nor Politeneſs fit and adequate for ſuch Places.

The APOLOGY.

WHAT I have undertaken may be difficult to execute, but it is uſeful and neceſſary; for as many are influenced in their Actions, more by what they hear, than what they ſee and read, if the Superior Clergy ſhould be thought, as repreſented, faulty, they will not think well, or be indifferent in the Practice of Religion.

I am likewiſe apprehenſive, that what ſhall be offered will merit but little Eſteem; for the Generality of Men are already prejudiced againſt me, and prepoſſeſſed with an idle Notion, that their Conduct is indefenſible. But as it is the Buſineſs of an Honeſt Man, and the Duty of a Chriſtian, fairly to deliver and boldly to ſpeak, what may appear to him to be the Truth, the Treatment, which I may meet with, cannot deter me from the Execution of my Deſign. If I reap none other Benefit, yet there is a certain Satisfaction, known only to thoſe who feel it, in defending injured Innocence.

The first Complaint against the Superior Clergy is, that the Ancients had less Incomes and were content; but these are never satisfied with Preferment. Two Livings, a Prebendary and Deanery are not enough, something more is wanted, which when obtained, Want still increases.—How absurd and ridiculous would it appear to be, to have nothing else of the Primitive Times, but its Poverty! That might be then necessary to procure Converts, but now as every poor Man is contemptible, if they were poor, they would soon become contemptible; for Men are valued according to their Wealth, and every one is accounted so much the better than another, by how much he is the richer. The State of the Church is greatly altered. Dignity must be supported; for no one honours a Title without an Estate. Besides, all their Income is not expended solely to support their Dignity, as is very evident from a Multitude of private Gifts and Donations; which, if publickly known, you would blush to charge them with Avarice. If they did those Things openly, you would accuse them of Pharisaical Ostentation; if they do them privately, you condemn them for Hypocrites. Hard Treatment! How must they act to please you?

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Is there any charitable Scheme, but you may find *one* of them a Subſcriber to it? If the Poor want Relief, or any Object of Diſtreſs appears, who more ready and willing to afford Aſſiſtance? If then Pluralities are coveted, you may be aſſured, that it is to do the more Good; and though you may not ſee the Good done, yet there can be no Reaſon to doubt it. It is owing to an extraordinary Modeſty and Humility, that their Works do not publickly appear.

You who are a Layman ſhould not complain, that the Clergy of old did not covet Wealth, nor die rich; for the Laity, in the primitive Times, hated Wealth as much, and died as poor. If then the Laity amaſs Bags of Gold for temporal Conveniences, the Clergy ſurely may, without Offence, ſave a few Mites to beſtow upon charitable Uſes.

Another Complaint is, that they live elegantly and fare ſumptuouſly every Day, whilſt many of their Brethren, not inferior in Piety and Learning, can hardly procure a neceſſary Subſiſtence; the Stipends they allow being ſo ſmall, from Twenty to Forty Pounds a Year; ſome not having ſo much.——What a low, mean and invidious Reflection is this! Suppoſing the Complaint to be true;

is it not as much as can be afforded and reasonably expected out of Livings, which yield no more than from three to six hundred Pounds a Year? Does it not become every Man to live agreeable to the Dignity of his Station, and according to what he is worth? Besides, it will teach Curates Humility, Self-denial and Mortification, which Youth, unless laid under Restraints, would never voluntarily consent to, nor perform: It takes them off from placing their Thoughts too much upon this World, and studying their own present Ease and Profit, instead of the future Good and Happiness of their Hearers. Not to mention, that the more the Superior Clergy have, the better able will they be to relieve the Poor; which Thing, like St. Paul, they make their particular Concern. The Scripture calls upon them to *let their Liberality be known unto all Men*. In Point of Duty therefore they can give no more, for then they could not administer to the Wants *of all Men*, which you find they are obliged to do. Sure no Christian can desire them to do that grudgingly or of Necessity, which their Conscience will not let them do.

It may be said, that in the Days of the Apostles it was different. They had then all

all Things in common. I anſwer, that the People, as well as the Prieſt, had then all Things in common. It is, therefore, unjuſt and unreaſonable to deſire the Clergy, equally to divide the Benefices of the Church, ſince the Laity will not imitate the other Example. But what have we Moderns to do with the old and obſolete Rules of the Apoſtles? The Circumſtances of Things alter, and many Cuſtoms, which were then in Uſe, were not intended always to oblige. The principal Buſineſs of the Apoſtles was to preach the Goſpel, and they renounced worldly Wealth and Grandeur, leſt they ſhould have been ſuſpected of preaching Godlineſs, as ſome Men did, for Gain only. It would have been ridiculous in an Apoſtle, who aſſerted, that the Goſpel condemned Covetouſneſs and the Love of this World, to have appeared with an Equipage, or to have hoarded up an hundred thouſand Pounds in a Cheſt. And would it not be equally ridiculous now, when the Eſtimate of real Worth is founded on outward Appearances, for any of the Superior Clergy to be ſeen in the Dreſs and Habit of an Apoſtle, with a Scrip, a Staff, Sandals on his Feet, one Coat, and never a Penny in his Purſe?

But

But why theſe Complaints of the Poverty of the Inferior Clergy? Is it any thing uncommon to ſee Merit cloathed in Rags, Intereſt preferred to Abilities, and Ignorance and Folly frequently uſurping the Rewards of Virtue and Learning? Amongſt all Orders of Men, theſe Evils obtain more or leſs. Would you have the Clergy to be ſingular? Amongſt whom, where one obtains Preferment by Merit, an hundred purchaſe it by the Purſe, by Family, or Party Intereſt.

Granting that the Complaints produced are weak and unjuſt, what can be offered to excuſe their interfering in Elections?——I am almoſt aſhamed to vouchſafe an Anſwer; yet it is neceſſary, leſt the paſſing the Complaint over in Silence ſhould be thought to proceed from Inability. Are not the Church and State ſo incorporated, that they cannot ſubſiſt apart? Is it not fit, that the Repreſentatives of the People ſhould be as well read in Religion as Politicks; as well acquainted with Chriſt, and the Writings of the Apoſtles, as Magna Charta and Acts of Parliament; that they ſhould have honeſt Hearts as well as able Heads? Is it difficult to conceive, in what Danger the State would be, and what Detriment the Church would receive,

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if the Repreſentatives of both ſhould prove to be Men of diſſolute and abandoned Principles? Do you then want to know, upon what Motives they ſollicit Votes? Do they ever recommend any, who are not zealous and approved Friends of the Church? Is it not from a tender and pious Concern for you as your ſpiritual Teachers, that they thus direct and perſuade you, leſt you ſhould do an Injury to, or offend your Conſcience? And will you ſay, that it is from the mercenary View of having a Living, Prebendary, or Sine Cure in Reverſion? It is falſe. They are Men of a true publick Spirit, and always act upon the Principles of Conſcience; they have ever had the Good of the State and the Honour of Religion, as well as the Profits ariſing from it, at Heart.

Another Complaint is againſt their preaching ſo ſeldom. We could bear with Pluralities, ſay many, provided the Poſſeſſors did more Duty. Not to labour in the Vineyard, but take the Fruits of it, is unjuſt; and ſo long as they neglect the former, and covet the latter, we muſt think that Pluralities are ſought for more for the Improvement of their own Bodies, than the Salvation of the People's Souls.—To which I reply, that as it is the Buſineſs of ſome to preach, ſo is it the Buſineſs of others to de-

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fend the Goſpel when attacked. If then they do not often appear in the Pulpit, you will always find them ſweating in their Studies; if you do not hear, you may, if diſpoſed, read their Works. But as proper Perſons are provided to ſupply their Places, which if the Law Term holds good here, that what a Man does by his Subſtitute, he is ſaid to do himſelf, the Complaint is groundleſs. Not to mention, that if they preached oftener, their Diſcourſes would be as little attended to as their Curates: But now they are more weighty and longer retained, Mankind being fond of Novelty, and more attentive to what they know they ſhall hear but ſeldom. It is a well known Truth, that when Things or Perſons have become familiar and of common Uſe, they are but little eſteemed and regarded. Men are ſuch unſtable and inconſtant Beings as to value nothing long.

The Superior Clergy have been frequently blamed for the partial Diſtribution of Livings in their Gift; which are for the moſt part diſpoſed of to Relations and Intimates, and to ſuch who are already provided for: Not ſo much regarding the Merit or Want of the Receiver, as the Power and Intereſt they ſhall acquire by ſuch Preſentations.—How weak the Reflection!

tion! How unjuſt to blame them, for what every Man, if it is a Fault, is guilty of! *Ought not every one*, as ſaith the Apoſtle, *to take Care of his own Houſehold?* Is it not an Inſtance of conſummate Prudence and moſt ſtrict Juſtice ſo to provide for them, as to place them out of the Poſſibility of ever wanting? Beſides, would it not be the higheſt Breach of Politeneſs and good Manners to neglect our rich Friends and Relations, though it might be to beſtow the Favour upon a more deſerving Stranger?

Do you find in public Life, when Places of Profit are to be diſpoſed of, that the Qualifications requiſite to fill them, are always enquired into? Does not every one conſult for and promote the Good of his own particular Friend? Do you not find, that the Man of an extenſive Acquaintance, though of ſlender Abilities, is frequently preferred to him, who has only this Diſqualification, that he is not enough known.

Do not Parents ſtudy to place their Children in ſuch Poſts, as are profitable and beneficial, though they may neither have Capacity nor Will to execute and diſcharge them, when obtained. You ſee that the Practice is general; you can have no Reaſon therefore to blame the Clergy, 'till you have

have altered your own Conduct. When you ſhall act unbiaſſed, impartial and unprejudiced in the Diſpoſal of your Favours, it will be the Time, but not till then, to call your ſpiritual Fathers to account for the contrary Behaviour.

You may ſay, that ſpiritual Places are widely different from Temporal, as future Happineſs is of greater Moment and Concern than the preſent, and therefore none ought to fill them but Perſons of unblemiſhed Character, ſound Piety and good Addreſs; that they ſhould not be leſs willing, than able to diſcharge the Truſt repoſed in them; that the Good of the Hearers ſhould be as much attended to as the Profits ariſing from them; and no one ſhould poſſeſs more Livings than he can perſonally reſide upon and diſcharge.—Theſe are Sentiments, it muſt be acknowledged, excellent and juſt. It is much to be wiſhed, that thoſe who have it in their Power, as well for their own Credit as the Intereſt of Chriſtianity, would act agreeably thereto. It is alſo wiſhed, that thoſe who admire theſe Sentiments, would, as Opportunities preſent, put them in Practice. For it is well known, when the Laity have a Power of electing their own Miniſters and Lecturers,

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they ſeldom elect according to Inclination and Will, but as Friends perſuade, Party influences and Intereſt directs. It is ridiculous, therefore, in the Laity to blame their Paſtors, for what they are equally deſerving of Cenſure. That this Complaint againſt the Church may have its proper Weight, the contrary Practice ſhould firſt prevail out of it.

It may be ſaid, why do you attempt to excuſe the Avarice of the Superior Clergy? Can you be ignorant, how they appropriate to themthemſelves the moſt trifling Perquiſites; and if refuſed to be ſurrendered, even ſuch Things to which they can have no juſt Right or reaſonable Pretenſion, they immediately diſmiſs their Curates from the Altar; how they reſerve to themſelves the moſt profitable Part of the occaſional Duty, and leave the Drudgery to their Slaves; how they ——— Forbear any further Cenſure. It is not for Profit, but out of reſpect to the Rich, that they do any occaſional Duty, for they have enough without it. Gehazi cannot be welcome, when Eliſha is near. Beſides, the Fee ariſing from it, is but a very ſmall Addition to their Income. As to the Preſents made to the Curates over and above the ſaid Fee, though intentionally and really given to them, who has

has a better Right? Are they not their Repreſentatives? As to giving the laborious Part of the Office to the Curates, it is not becauſe they think it to be leſs their Duty, or beneath their Dignity, Character and Function, but to teach them thoſe truly Chriſtian Virtues, Patience and Humility?

Another Complaint is, that when the Curate has acquired the Favour and Eſteem of the People, the Rector grows jealous, looks upon himſelf as undervalued, and ſoon diſcharges him.——The Servant ſhould not be greater than his Lord. This Behaviour does not proceed from the Fear of a Rival in Piety and Learning. Poverty will hinder the Curate from being a learned Man, and the Cares for the Neceſſaries of Life will be no little Obſtruction to his Piety. Can there be any juſt Reaſon then to ſuſpect, that this Conduct is the Effect of Envy or Malice? And it is equally falſe and unjuſt to ſay, that it is from an Apprehenſion of his Power and Intereſt being leſſened by the other's Merit and Applauſe: For he has in Poſſeſſion what may make him to be feared, if it cannot procure him Reverence; and he has none Occaſion to court the Eſteem of his Flock, or dread their Diſpleaſure; for whether or no the former is procured, or

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the latter avoided, the Payment of his Tythes is ſecured to him by Law.

Rectors thus behave towards their Curates, in order to check their Vanity and Ambition; for when they have become ſomewhat popular, they are apt to be led away with too great an Opinion of themſelves, think that they really have the Merit, which weak and ignorant Men are laviſh in beſtowing upon them, forget the Reſpect and Deference due to Superiors from Inferiors, are reſtleſs and uneaſy for Want of Preferment, and look upon themſelves more deſerving than their Maſters. You may, like the levelling Tribe, be ſo impertinent to aſk, wherein are they Superior? Have they greater Power in the Church? Are they not both equally Diſpenſers of the Privileges and Graces of the Goſpel? What is there that the one can do, which the other cannot? What is it that they have, which theſe have not? *A Living:* That is the Thing which ſets them at ſo great a Diſtance. And wherefore do you, who are a Layman, complain againſt this? Are you not frequently culpable in paying Reſpect to, or ſpeaking well of thoſe, who are accounted worthy rather on

Account of their Riches, than their Virtues? Are you not fond of imitating the ridiculous Example of the Tyrians and Sidonians of old in revering them, who, but for their Wealth and Power, would be treated with Contempt and Ignominy.

But why do you complain of the Hardſhips of the Inferior Clergy? Many of them have more than they deſerve. They are Men of little Note, of leſs Ability. Their Characters are indifferent, and their Behaviour is ſo inſolent, that inſtead of adding to, it may be more prudent to leſſen their Salary, and bring them back again to their fourteen and ſixteen Pounds per Annum; if otherwiſe it may be neceſſary to make ſome Diſtinction. The moſt modeſt and decent Propoſal of this Sort, is that of an Eſſex Vicar, that the Curates ſhould be diſtinguiſhed from the Rectors by wearing a Badge upon the left Arm. The Propoſal did not meet with the Reception it highly merited. In all Probability it would have taken Place, had not this Inconvenience been foreſeen; for by ſuch a Diſtinction it would have been too publickly known, who did the moſt Duty. To diſrobe them of the Scarf would be no little Diminution of their

their Pride: But as moſt of their Superiors have as little Claim to it, this Propoſal muſt be ineffectual. The beſt Method is to continue them at hard Labour and little Pay. The pale and meagre Look, the lean and lank Carcaſe, with the tattered and threadbare Gown, will be Diſtinction enough.

We are told in Scripture, that Chriſt hath ordained, that *they who preach the Goſpel, ſhould live of the Goſpel.* This Paſſage hath been generally thus underſtood; *That for all thoſe, who perform the Office of a Miniſter of the Goſpel, a decent and comfortable Proviſion ſhould be made.* The Context ſeems to determine this to be the true Meaning. But as there are few who enjoy ſuch a Proviſion, it will be better to underſtand it differently from the common Interpretation. It will be putting a Force upon the Words; but it is excuſeable, ſince our Lord's Appointment, which is general, would have never been fulfilled but in a few particular Perſons. I ſuppoſe, therefore, that the living of the Goſpel does not ſignify a temporal Maintenance; for then Religion would appear, what it is commonly reputed to be, a Trade, Art, or Profeſſion, by which Men, as in other

Employments, are to obtain their daily Support and Subſiſtence; but has Reſpect to a future State of Bliſs and Happineſs, to which thoſe will be entitled, who have faithfully diſcharged the high Truſt repoſed in them. The Jewiſh Prieſts, as they were Preachers of a Law founded on temporal Sanctions, were to partake of temporal Bleſſings; but the Miniſters of Chriſt, whoſe Religion is more particularly founded on Things future, not on Things preſent, were not to look for nor expect preſent, but future Comforts.

I muſt confeſs, that this Comment is not ſtrictly juſt. I doubt not, however, of its Reception and Approbation both by the Superior and Inferior Clergy. By the former, becauſe if the Paſſage is literally underſtood, many of them could not, as the Office of a Prieſt is ſeldom performed by them, lay claim to, nor enjoy their Temporalities; by the latter, becauſe as they partake of few of the Comforts of this Life, if their Reward was not to be future, they of all Men would be the moſt miſerable.

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There are more Complaints brought against the Superior Clergy *; but as what have been produced, appear to be highly ſcandalous and invidious, and they are to be conſidered in another Tract, it is now unneceſſary to mention them.

* Let it be remembered, that there are ſome amongſt them whoſe Characters are unexceptionable, and whoſe Conduct needs no Apology.

THE CONDITION OF AN AUTHOR.

THE CONDITION OF AN AUTHOR.

WHOEVER propoſes to become an Author, ſhould previouſly reſolve to bear Contradiction and Diſappointment; be equally ready to learn as to communicate; and principally take Care not only to write, but live well. For no ſooner has he made his Appearance in Publick, but the Eyes of the whole World are upon him. Then Enquiries begin. Who is he? Of what Note? Of what Party? Are his Principles and Morals good? How does he write? Does the Work contain any thing

thing new? Has the Bookſeller recommended it? This Treatment he muſt expect, not only from the Weak and Ignorant, but, ſtrange as it is, from Perſons of Senſe and Underſtanding. The Anſwers returned are commonly hurtful and prejudicial both to the Credit and Intereſt of an Author; for by them Works, not read, nor ſeen, have been condemned; and what, when peruſed, might have procured Eſteem, have been cenſured through the Malevolence of a prejudiced Reader. Theſe Reports find too eaſy an Acceſs and too ſtrongly influence. Men of Learning have a ſuperſtitious Veneration for the Parts and Perſons of their Acquaintance, and are too apt to imitate the weak Papiſt in admitting their Authority to be, like the Pope's, infallible.

The Bookſeller, if the Author has not offered him the Refuſal of the Copy, but preſumed to print for himſelf without his Licence, treats the Work with a Sneer. It is well known, that the Recommendation of the Trade is of ſingular Service to the Author's Intereſt, not his Reputation; and their Cenſures have proved as effectual as damning a Play by the Pit, though it frequently happens, that the one is cenſured and

and the other damned, rather from Prejudice and Ignorance than Underſtanding and Judgment, and oftentimes diſcover both a Want of Senſe and Delicacy of Taſte. The Bookſeller ſeldom knows more than the Title Page; that determines the Fate of an Author with him. A Work indifferently executed will have a proper Sale, if it ſhould merit his Approbation (many of his Cuſtomers relying upon his Opinion) which is not to be procured but by writing for or printing with him: An Author who writes for himſelf will meet with no Encouragement from him.

Not leſs hurtful to him are the Criticks; thoſe who do not write themſelves, but employ, rather miſemploy, their Time in ridiculing and expoſing, what they cannot imitate, and found their Merit upon Raillery and Declamation. They allow of no Superior, hardly an equal in Knowledge and Judgment. The Subject, the Manner of treating it, the Stile, or Sentiments diſpleaſe and offend them. They read only to find Fault, and all the Favour the beſt Author can expect, is to be looked upon as indifferent.

Little Praiſe and much Cenſure is the Fate of an Author, who has no Patron,

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Title, Place, nor Purſe. Theſe, and theſe Qualifications only, have recommended Writings which deſerved, and in all probability would otherwiſe have received, the publick Cenſure; whilſt other Authors of more natural and acquired Parts, but penurious and undiſtinguiſhed, have been, if at all, read with Indifference, and frequently ſtifled in their Birth. This was the Caſe of a learned and pious Divine, in the laſt Century, whoſe great Abilities, ſlighted and diſregarded by his own Countrymen, were taken Notice of by Foreigners, and procured him ſingular Honours from abroad, which raiſed him from a Vicarage, in an obſcure Place, to a Prelacy at Home; long merited, but without ſuch an uncommon Incident might have never been conferred.

Praiſe and Cenſure are equally fatal to an Author, if he wants either Modeſty or Reſolution; for then he will either be too much elevated or depreſſed; he will entertain too high or too mean an Opinion of himſelf. In the former Caſe he will become preſumptuous, conceited and poſitive; in the latter, he will be apt to tread in the beaten Track, and give himſelf to write agreeable to the Prejudices of Mankind. A Practice which he may the more readily fall

fall into, becauſe he will find it more for his Intereſt, than to oppoſe and contradict them.

An Author, who does not diſplay more Learning than Underſtanding, who does not abound more in Reading than Invention, oftentimes meets with an unwelcome Reception. There is a Sort of Men amongſt the Learned, who do not chuſe to think for themſelves, and are only pleaſed with thoſe Writers, who are ſo weak or ſo fooliſh as with them to give up their Freedom. They are ſo ſtrangely prepoſſeſſed in Favour of the Ancients, that they will read no Writings, but what are agreeable to their Opinions, or filled with large Extracts from them.

Greek and Latin Quotations do not ſo much ſhew good Senſe, as the Poſſeſſion, or Uſe of a large Library: By which Perſons of no real Parts and Erudition have acquired the Eſteem and Character of Learned Men. It is both profitable and reputable to adorn, rather to fill, a Work with Quotations. What might have been eaſily and more ſenſibly compriſed in a ſmall Pamphlet, has been by this Means worked up to an Octavo. This has been practiſed with great Succeſs. Several have been rewarded

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and preferred, admired and celebrated, not for Invention and Reaſoning of their own, but of others: So that mere Tranſcribers have aſſumed to themſelves, the Credit and Reputation of great and learned Authors, for publiſhing Folio's; which ſetting aſide the Table of Contents, Title Page, and a few Ligaments, little elſe of their own remains. This Eſteem any Scribbler can acquire, by the Help of an Index, with a few Sentences of his own to make the Connection. An Author who does not humour theſe Admirers of ancient Writings, either by commending, defending, tranſcribing their Sentiments, writing Comments upon them, or citing them for Authorities, will be treated as ignorant, and his Works deemed of no Value.

I am perſuaded, that I ſhall provoke the heavy Diſpleaſure of theſe Antiquarians, for ſuch ſlight Treatment of the Ancients. But if they would lay aſide Prejudice and candidly conſider, of what real Uſe they are, they would not be angry with me, nor implicitly follow them. In Regard to ancient Rites, Cuſtoms, Ceremonies or Matters of Fact, Pagan, Jewiſh or Chriſtian, to which there may be any Alluſions in Sacred Writ, their Writings are undoubtedly neceſſary

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and uſeful, and their Authority valid and good: But in reſpect of moral, natural or revealed Truths, their Sentiments can neither make them true nor falſe, and they will ſo appear, notwithſtanding all that they have ſaid for or againſt them; (whoſe nice and refined Explanations, have ſerved to raiſe Doubts and encourage Controverſies amongſt Mankind) which require only common Senſe and common Honeſty to ſet forth and underſtand; which, however, will remain unſettled and undetermined, ſo long as Men continue to proſtitute their Parts, and give up their Freedom of Thinking and Believing for Themſelves.

The Sacred Writers may be credited with Safety, for they were inſpired. Their Interpreters pretend not to Inſpiration, and therefore, though pious and good, yet conſidering how ſtrongly Prejudices do operate, the ſhort Extent of the human Underſtanding, and its Imperfections, neither their Opinions nor Judgment, are to be implicitly followed and received. Every one, who can, is to judge for himſelf. Nature has given to Man that Liberty, and Chriſtianity has not deprived him of it, though Popery has attempted it. If every one, who could, would have judged for himſelf, Chriſtians would

would not have been ſo divided, nor have been led to embrace Notions contradictory to Senſe, Reaſon, Humanity and the Scriptures; nor would they have been ſo long, and ſo ſucceſsfully propagated for the Service of Avarice, Ambition, Faction, Enthuſiaſm and Superſtition. The Reader will, I hope, excuſe this Digreſſion upon the Ancients, when he reflects that moſt of the religious Controverſies, have ſprung not ſo much from the dubious and obſcure Senſe of Scripture, but their Opinions and Interpretations.

Next to theſe Antiquarians there are others of the Learned, who are never pleaſed with any Writings, but thoſe which favour their own particular Studies or Prejudices, looking upon other Writings as uſeleſs and inſignificant. The Metaphyſician condemns Poetry; the Poet, Metaphyſicks; the Lawyer, Divinity; the Divine, Law; the Diſſenter, Church Writings; the Churchman, thoſe in Favour of the Meeting. Theſe are Prejudices which have been adopted by Learned Men, and have proved of great Diſadvantage to Truth as well as to Authors, whoſe Studies have been different. This Behaviour was almoſt ſunk into Contempt, till revived by a late Profeſſor of Aſtronomy,

who

who endeavoured to render a Science ridiculous, by Witticiſms and Buffooneries, the Uſes of which he did not or would not enquire into.

Next to theſe, are ſuch who read none but finiſhed Pieces; other Compoſitions are too mean, incorrect or inelegant: Compoſitions, however, not leſs uſeful and neceſſary to the Bulk of Mankind, who would profit but little from the others, which require a Depth of Thought, which they have not, and Leiſure which they are not Maſters of, to examine into and underſtand. Stile and Manner are to be acquired by Time, great Reading and frequent Writing: In religious Subjects not ſo much required. For the more Plainneſs and Simplicity, the leſs Art and Labour appear in ſuch Writings, the more extenſive their Influence: They do not indeed recommend themſelves to the Virtuoſi in Learning, who are only delighted and ſatisfied with Things difficult, if at all, to be underſtood, and above vulgar Apprehenſions.

There are a few of a different Turn, who pay no Regard to the Author but the Work, and like the induſtrious Bee can extract ſome Sweet from every Flower. They know that every one is not born to

be a Newton, a Boyle, a Locke, a Butler, a Milton, a Pope, &c. Writers who will ever pleaſe, though they have not eſcaped the Envy and Malice of falſe Criticiſm. They can commend and praiſe the little Notices and Informations of inferior Writers, which thoſe Genius's, taking more noble Flights, or treading in Paths but little frequented, paſſed by not unknown, but unnoticed.

Another Diſadvantage to an Author ariſes from the Want of a learned Acquaintance, upon whoſe Friendſhip he might rely; by whom his Works might be corrected, reviſed, and placed out of the Power of the envious, malicious, or ill-natured Critick. They would ſtrike out many Inaccuracies, &c. which an Author, partial to himſelf and fond of his own Compoſitions, is apt to paſs over. It is beſt to ſee with other Mens Eyes, for we are all inclined to be blind to our own Defects. The unprejudiced Reader, and ſuch a one is a true Friend, ſees Things in a different Light. Great is the Advantage of ſuch a Friendſhip. I know an Author now in high Eſteem in the Republick of Letters, who procured an extraordinary Reputation by it, having been publickly

lickly honoured with a Degree at the Univerſity.

Another Diſadvantage to an Author ariſes from writing upon Subjects which have been diſcuſſed; ſo that in the Opinion of many he only adds to the Number of Books, already too great. If the Books wrote in every Science and Art were ſatisfactory, and ſo compoſed, as entirely to remove and fully anſwer all future Doubts and Exceptions, the writing more would be ridiculous and abſurd. To aſſert that they are, is not leſs ridiculous and abſurd. If the Subject is the ſame, the Thought and Proofs may be different, and the Manner of ranging, diſpoſing and expreſſing them, more ſtriking and affecting. Every Age is capable of improving upon the preceding, either by correcting its Errors, or diſplaying its Beauties and Excellencies in a new and more advantageous Light. Science and Art may be further extended; they are not arrived at the utmoſt Limit of Thought, Ingenuity and Experience, as modern Diſcoveries and Improvement ſhew. Truth will never be without Adverſaries, who dreſs up the old Exceptions in a new Taſte, and by that Means, if they do not in ſome Degree render former Anſwers uſeleſs, make it neceſſary to put them into another Form.

An Author, if young, finds but few Friends. His Youth is a grand Exception againſt his Writings, his Arguments being generally eſtimated by his Years: But Wiſdom does not belong only to the Aged, nor does the Beard always make the Philoſopher. If the Subject is of Importance, his Abilities are queſtioned, or the Attempt cenſured, either as weak or bold. This Treatment is ungenerous; for if Perſons of more Knowledge and Experience, either chuſe not, or from other Connections and Engagements cannot, what ſo blameable if others of leſs Note and Capacity undertake it? What Matter is it, if the Cauſe of Virtue and Religion is promoted, who are the Advocates? The Reaſoning may not be ſo powerful, nor the Arguments ſo convincing as in the Hands of a more able Writer; yet weak and defective as both may be, ſome Perſons may be both entertained and improved by the Reading. Writers, whoſoever they may be, deſerve not the publick Cenſure but Approbation, if they write with Candor and Decency, and have a ſtrict Regard and Attention to what, upon the moſt ſtrict and impartial Examination, appears to be the Truth.

The

The Credit of an Author is beſt preſerved, though his Intereſt is leaſt promoted by anonymous Writings *. By them he oftentimes meets with Praiſe inſtead of Cenſure, and is privately applauded, for what, if known, he might be publickly condemned. Names have a great Effect upon many Readers. I knew an Author, who publiſhed his firſt Eſſay in this Manner, leſt the Greatneſs of the Subject and the Meanneſs of his Perſon, ſhould have raiſed Prejudices againſt it. The Method proved of ſingular Uſe, as it procured a kind and favourable Reception, and he acquired no ſmall Reputation by it. Some Time after he ventured to put his Name to a ſecond Edition; By which his Reputation was loſt, his Abilities were queſtioned, his Arguments, before deemed ſtrong and nervous, were treated as weak and inconcluſive, and he was in general looked upon as a Perſon

* The Bookſeller muſt ſhare the Profit with him; happy if that will content. If ingenious and poor, he will afterwards be inliſted in the Service of the Trade, and be obliged to write, not as Truth, but as his Maſter dictates, which will always be agreeable to the reigning Taſte and Humour of the Age, right or wrong, becauſe the Intereſt of the Bookſeller is chiefly promoted by it.

very improper for the Subject he had attempted. The Publication of Works in this Manner, beſides removing many Prejudices, frequently prevents the Envy and Malice of little Criticks, who are afraid of an Ambuſcade, leſt the Authors ſhould prove an Over-Match for them.

To write againſt Prejudices, Civil or Religious, if they are of a long ſtanding and have gained a general Approbation, is very diſadvantageous to an Author. He muſt expect Candour and Civility from few; Words of Reproach and Virulence from many. Let him, however, forbear Reſentment, for that betrays a Weakneſs, which lays him open to his Adverſaries, and deſtroys the Force of his Arguments. He will have Need of Spirit and Reſolution; for what he writes for the Improvement and Conviction of others, frequently terminates in the Ruin of his own Intereſt. Whatſoever may be the Conſequence to himſelf, let him ſtrictly adhere to Truth; otherwiſe in Proportion to his Reputation and Influence, he may be the Occaſion of much Error, and be productive of more Evil than Good amongſt Mankind, which every Writer ſhould be careful to avoid.

Let

Let him, like the true Patriot, be diſintereſted, free from any ſelfiſh private Ends, having the Publick Good ſolely in View; then if he merits nothing here, he will not fail of receiving a proper Reward hereafter.

SERMONS.

SERMONS.

CAUSES *assigned for the Continuance and Progress of* INFIDELITY.

2 TIM. ii. 25.

" In Meekness instructing those that op-
" pose themselves; if God peradventure
" will give them Repentance to the ac-
" knowledging of the Truth."

THE singular Benefits and Advantages Society reaps from the Profession and Practice of Christianity, should recommend it to the Esteem and Reverence of all Men. If its Authority was dubious or false, yet as it appears to be cal-

calculated for the preſent Good of Mankind, every one who knew it ſo to be, ſhould rather endeavour to conceal than divulge the Secret. The Concealment would be of Service, but a Publication of Prejudice to a State; inaſmuch as it is found, that Men are with Difficulty kept within due Bounds by human Laws, though rigorous and ſevere: And therefore it may be reaſonably ſuppoſed, that, was the Opinion of a future State deſtroyed, the Sanction of the Chriſtian Religion, we ſhould ſee leſs of Honeſty and more of Fraud, leſs of Virtue and more of Vice, leſs Peace and Satisfaction, more Diſquiet and Diſcontent in the World. Notwithſtanding Chriſtianity has been thus uſeful and beneficial to Society, yet there are not wanting Perſons who openly treat it with Contempt, who neither reſpect its Authority, nor obſerve its Laws. There have been ſufficient Proofs offered to eſtabliſh the former, and the latter need no Recommendation, yet Infidelity prevails; it prevails, notwithſtanding the Arguments in Favour of Revelation are neither weak nor defective. To what Cauſes are we then to attribute its Continuance and Progreſs? What ſhould occaſion the Scriptures to be ſuſpected? To the following,

ing, amongſt other Cauſes, this Obſtinacy and Perverſeneſs, in oppoſing and rejecting its Evidence, may be owing.

Firſt, The ſevere Treatment Infidels meet with in our Diſputes and Controverſies with them.

Secondly, The ſcandalous and immoral Lives of Chriſtians.

Thirdly, The various Sects and Parties in Religion, and the contradictory Tenets eſpouſed, maintained and defended from the ſame Scriptures, believed and adhered to by their reſpective Followers.

Firſt, The ſevere Treatment Infidels meet with in our Diſputes and Controverſies with them, is one Cauſe of the Continuance and Progreſs of Infidelity.

We, like the Apoſtles, who ſollicited Chriſt to revenge the uncivil Treatment of the Samaritans by commanding Fire from Heaven, invoke divine Puniſhments upon their Heads, uſe opprobious and inſulting Language, and, not content with ſuch Treatment, ungenerouſly and unnaturally, not to ſay unchriſtianly, pronounce Damnation upon them. A Practice ſo common, that to treat them courteouſly, we may be ſuſpected of Infidelity. But let me aſk, on what Account is this Treatment? Is it, becauſe they preſume

to

to examine into the Evidence of Religion? If this is done, not for the Sake of cavilling, but their own private Satisfaction; not to raiſe and encourage Doubts in others, but to convince themſelves of its Truth; in what are they to be blamed? If Religion will not bear the Scrutiny of Reaſon, is repugnant to, or inconſiſtent with it, it is not a true but a falſe Syſtem, and its Influence can no longer exiſt, like to the Pagan Syſtems of old, than as the Power of the State continues to uphold and ſupport it. But as it is of better Original than Paganiſm, ſo is it ſupported by a different Authority. Its Author is God; its Support Reaſon; without the Uſe and Exerciſe of which (which ſome over-zealous Chriſtians are for wholly laying aſide in Matters of Religion) we ſhould not be able to diſtinguiſh Truth from Error, nor to guard againſt the Deluſions and Deceptions of artful and deſigning Men. To take Things upon Truſt is not only an Abuſe of the Faculties God has endowed us with, but makes Religion to be the Effect of Place or Education.

What has Truth to fear from the moſt ſtrict Enquiry? To condemn or prohibit ſuch an Enquiry, creates Suſpicions and Jea-

Jealouſies, is apt to make Men leſs candid and impartial, and to look upon that to be the Effect of Fraud and Impoſture, which deprives them of the Uſe of their Reaſon, and leaves them no more Underſtanding than the Brute. It is not criminal to doubt of the Evidence of Religion, nor to be unſatisfied with the Proofs of it, if the Mind is kept clear from Prejudice, if the Enquiry is candid and impartial, and our Lives governed by the Precepts, though uninfluenced by the Belief of Religion. Bigots and Zealots allot ſuch Perſons an hard Fate; but this need not ſurpriſe, ſince Chriſtians, who differ from them, are no better treated. Damnation is preſumptuouſly beſtowed upon both.

It is, indeed, Obſtinacy and Perverſeneſs to diſbelieve every Thing; the Truth of which we have not, nor can have any ſenſible demonſtrative Proof, nor eaſily apprehend: It is alſo a Folly and Weakneſs to admit any thing of Importance to be true, without a juſt and ſtrict Examination and as clear an Apprehenſion, as far as it can be obtained, of its Evidence, Fitneſs and Propriety. And is not Religion of the greateſt Importance, not more to Mankind in general, than to every Individual? Does it not

not belong to every one rightly to inform himſelf of it, that his Expectations of Happineſs may be well founded, and he in the End not diſappointed? So far from its being unlawful to procure ſuch Information, that as Men we ought, and as Chriſtians we are by our Religion required, to examine and ſearch into its Authority. If we have Abilities, it is our Duty; it may be criminal to neglect it. If ſuch did examine, Hereſies and Enthuſiaſms would not ſo much prevail. Where Abilities are not, Reliance muſt be upon the Credit and Veracity of others. The Scripture ſaith, *He that believeth ſhall be ſaved, and he that believeth not ſhall be damned.* But can any one imagine that an external Profeſſion of Chriſtianity will entitle him to Salvation? Let it not then be ſaid that Infidelity, unleſs Immorality, Indolence, Neglect, Obſtinacy or Preſumption is the Cauſe, is the Object of Damnation. How raſh, how bold is Man in thus preſcribing the Terms of Salvation and uſurping the Divine Power!

Vice and Folly frequently give Birth to Exceptions againſt Religion. Perſons addicted thereto ſhould rather excite our Pity, than provoke our Reſentment. They ſuffer enough here; let us leave them to God here-

hereafter, not condemn them to a Puniſhment, which we have no Power to inflict, ſince ſuch Behaviour tends rather to harden, than reclaim them. Not content with this unjuſt Condemnation, we treat them as the vileſt and the worſt of Men, without any Principle of Honeſty and Goodneſs, without Senſe and Underſtanding: A Method not likely to be inſtrumental in their Converſion. Permit me to obſerve, that as we are entirely ignorant of the ſecret Springs of Men's Actions, a more charitable Opinion would better become us; it is more agreeable to the Character of a Chriſtian, of which Chriſt's Rebuke to his Apoſtles is a Proof, *ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of*; it diſcovers more Humanity, witneſs the Prejudices and Imperfections of Human Nature; and it is certainly more prudent, if we expect to be ſucceſsful in our Controverſies with them.

Their Weakneſs may be complied with, and no Injury offered to Religion. Unleſs they are uſed like Men, and argued with as reaſonable Creatures, their Conviction and Reformation will be in vain attempted. No one, however, weak and inſignificant, chuſes to be ſo accounted; nor to be called a Fool, though he may deſerve the Title:

An Appellation of that Sort will invalidate and ſet aſide every Argument, though reaſonable and juſt. Kindneſs and Civility are the beſt Means to procure Friends and reconcile Enemies: But to tell Men that they are entirely in the wrong, and that they ſhall be damned, unleſs they implicitly believe, not what the Scriptures always ſay, but, more frequently, our Interpretations of them, which they know are equally fallible with their own Sentiments, will be of little Service, as Experience has teſtified, from the few Converts made, in reconciling them to Chriſtianity. The behaving towards them like Men will ſhew, that we have a real Concern for their Happineſs, ſoften their Prejudices, and diſpoſe them to think more favourably of, at leaſt to treat Religion both in their Writings and Converſation with Temper and Decency. The contrary Behaviour will create a greater Diſguſt againſt it, and they will be led to think, that it tends only to deſtroy good Nature and good Manners, and to countenance Hatred and Strife, Cruelty and Revenge amongſt Mankind.

Secondly, The ſcandalous and immoral Lives of Chriſtians, is another Cauſe of the Continuance and Progreſs of Infidelity.

When

When we look around, and ſee how many profeſs, how few practiſe Chriſtianity; when we obſerve Men, who ſhould be diſtinguiſhed for Virtue and Piety, Examples of Vice and Immorality: Theſe Things muſt neceſſarily give to Perſons, who either cannot or will not judge for themſelves, an unfavourable Opinion of Religion. It is natural for ſuch to think, when Men, remarkable for their Senſe and Underſtanding, act in this Manner, who have Leiſure and Opportunity for knowing the Truth of what they profeſs to believe, that they ſuſpect its Credit and Authority. And as Vice has generally a ſtronger Aſcendency and Influence than Virtue, it is not ſtrange, that Men, addicted to unlawful Gratifications, ſhould be glad to be releaſed from Reſtraints, and to treat the Goſpel as falſe, which by their Actions they would not have to be true.

There is no better Way of recommending the Practice of any thing, than by Example. It is extremely difficult to convince any one of the Uſefulneſs and Neceſſity of what our Conduct proves to be indifferent. To talk of the Excellency of Chriſtianity, when our Lives contradict our Words, is not likely to gain many Converts to it.

Chriſtianity is indeed the ſame, notwithſtanding all that can be ſaid or done againſt it: Its Obligation and Authority not being leſſened, though many are wicked enough to tranſgreſs its Laws.

But if we are really convinced of its Truth, and believe a future State of Reward and Puniſhment, how can we better ſatisfy others of this Belief and Conviction, than by letting our Lives and Converſation be agreeable thereto? In vain do we recommend the Practice of Goodneſs to others, unleſs we ourſelves are good. In vain do we endeavour to ſet forth the Obligation to Temperance and Honeſty, when we are intemperate and diſhoneſt. In vain do we tell Infidels that our Religion is true, when we act as if it was falſe. All Arguments will prove ineffectual, unleſs we are influenced by its Precepts. To convince Men that there is a God, let us live as if there was one; to ſhew our Belief of a future State, let us behave like Men who are to give an Account in it; and if we admit the Truth of Chriſtianity, let us obſerve its Laws. Infidels will then think that we are in Earneſt, that there is ſomething more in Religion than mere Shew and Pretence.

As

As Irregularity is the principal Cauſe of Infidelity, for a good Man is hard to be found who is an Infidel, no Method can be ſo effectual to check and diſcountenance it, and to procure that Eſteem and Reverence for Religion, which it juſtly and truly, for its own Worth and Excellency, claims from all, than for Chriſtians themſelves to eſteem and reverence it; ſince to treat it with Indifference and Contempt, to live in Oppoſition to thoſe Laws, which they have ſolemnly engaged to obſerve, and to imitate the vicious and immoral Examples of the Libertine and Infidel, will undoubtedly promote the Cauſe of Vice, and ſtrengthen, not weaken, the Cauſe of Infidelity. Of this we may be aſſured, that it will be impoſſible to convince Gainſayers of the Divinity of our Religion, unleſs its Power and Influence are ſhewn in our Lives and Converſation.

Thirdly, The various Sects and Parties in Religion, and the contradictory Tenets eſpouſed, maintained and defended from the ſame Scriptures, believed and adhered to by their reſpective Followers, is another Cauſe of the Continuance and Progreſs of Infidelity.

Theſe Differences reflect no little Diſhonour upon the Profeſſors of Chriſtianity, not upon Chriſtianity; for it neither countenances, nor encourages Diviſions amongſt Men. Such Differences, the various Tempers, Intereſts and Prejudices of Mankind being candidly conſidered, are not ſtrange; might ſo appear, if not to happen. We wiſh, that they were fewer in Number, and that Chriſtians would comply with each other's Weakneſs, and give Way in Matters of little Moment, wherein neither their own Salvation, nor the Authority of the Goſpel, are concerned; for the inveighing and exclaiming againſt each other, wreſting and perverting the Senſe of the ſacred Writings to confirm and ſupport the Opinions eſpouſed, making Things indifferent neceſſary, Things neceſſary indifferent, and obtruding private Interpretations as binding upon the Conſcience of Men, cannot fail of bringing Religion into Diſrepute with thoſe, who are determined more by the Conduct and Behaviour of others, than their own Judgment and Reaſon.

Theſe Differences have not only countenanced Infidelity, but have produced a Coldneſs and Lukewarmneſs in Religion: Differences

ferences which all honeſt and good Men, who have a Regard for Chriſtianity and the Happineſs of Society, wiſh to be compoſed. From thence have proceeded Troubles and Diſorders in the State; from thence a Corruption of Manners, as well as the Principle of Unbelief, generally flows. When weak Men, who judge not for themſelves, obſerve theſe various and jarring Opinions; when they ſee Kindneſs and Civility ſhewn, Preferment and Titles beſtowed, not according to Merit and Ability, but according to a particular Sect or Following; when they perceive that each Sect charges the other with aſſerting and maintaing Things contrary to the holy Scriptures, even doubting of the Salvation of thoſe who differ from them; what can they think, but that it is as good to be without Religion, ſince of whatſoever Sect they are, they ſhall be wrong, and their Salvation dangerous, if not precarious.

It is not our Buſineſs to talk of, but practiſe Religion. Let us rather endeavour to make our Lives agreeable to, than reconcile our Notions with it. Let us confine ourſelves to Matters plainly delivered, not examine nor enquire into Things above our Reaſon and Underſtanding, nor impoſe the

Belief of any Doctrine as abſolutely neceſſary to Salvation, of which we muſt confeſs that we cannot have the leaſt Knowledge and Intuition. Let us love as Brethren, neither caluminating, condemning, nor perſecuting each other; then Men of weak or wicked Principles will be inclined to think that Chriſtianity is really calculated for the good of Mankind, when they ſhall ſee Harmony, Love and Union, inſtead of Diſſention, Strife and Hatred, reigning amongſt Chriſtians. To theſe Cauſes, amongſt others, are to be attributed the Continuance and Progreſs of Infidelity.

The following Advice will not, I hope, be thought uſeleſs; we wiſh indeed that it was unneceſſary. As Infidelity is the genuine Offspring of Immorality; as Immorality much abounds in the Age we live; as by the Frequency and Univerſality of it, the Senſe of Shame is loſt, and a Regard for Decency is no more; as Men dare openly talk of and defend thoſe Vices, which they have ſecretly committed; and as theſe Practices not only expoſe the Aggreſſors to future, but are productive of preſent Miſery, let me intreat you for your own ſake to be virtuous and good. I am perſuaded a little Reflection will convince

you,

you, that it is for your temporal Intereſt ſo to be, and that there can be no true and real Enjoyment of Life without it.

Conſider your Engagement as Chriſtians, that you are declared Enemies to Vice. Remember that you forfeit the Reward promiſed, unleſs you act conſiſtent with that Engagement. If a Regard for the Honour of God cannot influence you to obſerve his Laws, think on the Puniſhment you become obnoxious to by the Neglect: Believe me, rather believe yourſelves, for you cannot be ignorant of this, that you will not long be wicked, before you are ſuperior to the Power of Conſcience, live as without Religion, and in the End declare againſt it: For he who is an Infidel in Practice, will ſoon be an Infidel in Principle.

Do not deceive yourſelves. For what do you propoſe to yourſelves by criminal and unlawful Gratifications? Do you expect to meet with no Interruption? Granting that they are at firſt pleaſant and agreeable, flatter not yourſelf that thus they will always be. I need not mention the Uneaſineſs, which Sinners frequently feel within themſelves, to themſelves well known, notwith-

withſtanding they labour to conceal and diſguiſe it from the World. Poverty, Diſgrace and Diſeaſe, the ſure, if ſlow Attendants of Vice and Folly, ſhew the promiſed Felicity to have been not real, but imaginary. You need not be told, that this is the certain Condition of the Wicked. Let your Acquaintance with Mankind be ever ſo little, you muſt have both ſeen and known this to have been the unhappy Lot of many. Scarce can you walk abroad, but theſe ſad and deplorable Objects are preſenting themſelves to your Sight. What you have ſeen then in others, do not want to experience in yourſelves. If you follow the ſame bad Ways, you may expect to meet with the ſame Affliction and Diſtreſs.

You may imagine, that you ſhall never give up your Profeſſion, and declare for Infidelity. Do not impoſe upon yourſelf; and act the Part of an Hypocrite; for you cannot be a Chriſtian, unleſs you practiſe Chriſtianity. Your Compliance with extenal Forms and Modes of Worſhip is only from a Regard to Decency, and to have the Reputation of an honeſt and good Man, as you find it neceſſary to promote your worldly

worldly Affairs; few, if any, tho' wicked, chuſing to deal with thoſe who are of bad Character, or do not put on the Appearance of Goodneſs. This Conduct, ſo long as the Vizard continues, may be of Service here, but will not entitle you to Happineſs hereafter.

But why ſhould you only affect to be the Chriſtian? Why ſhould you not be, in reality, what you profeſs you ought to be? Why ſhould you put yourſelf to Inconveniences and Difficulties to conceal and diſguiſe your Actions from public Notice? Why ſubject yourſelf to continual Fear and Uneaſineſs, leſt your Hypocriſy ſhould be detected? Why will you not endeavour to be, what you are ſo anxious and deſirous of appearing? eſpecially as you acknowledge it to be your Intereſt, and greatly to your Prejudice if you are not.

In ſhort, as a Motive to be good, let me obſerve, that your Vices are expenſive; that you cannot promiſe yourſelf more than a momentary Enjoyment of them; that they are not to be enjoyed, but at the Expence both of Health and Fortune; that they tend to the Ruin of the Conſtitution both of Body and Mind; and for the

the Pleaſure of a few Years you will live the Remainder of your Days in Trouble or Sorrow, Poverty or Diſeaſe. Such is the miſerable State of the wicked in this Life; worſe in the next, if, as they live, they die impenitent. May neither the one nor the other be your Lot.

A FAST SERMON *on the* 11th *of* FEBRUARY, 1757.

I. SAMUEL ii. 30.

" For them that honour me, I will honour;
" and they that deſpiſe me, ſhall be
" lightly eſteemed."

WE are this Day met according to the Royal Appointment. The deſign of our Meeting is to implore the Divine Aid and Protection, and to avert the divine Wrath and Diſpleaſure. The Neceſſity of it at this Time, is the bad Situation of our Affairs, and our numberleſs Vices and Impieties, which may juſtly alarm our Fears, as they ſeem to have rendered us

us Objects rather of Vengeance, than of Favour.

The Solemnity with which this Fast is observed, must give Pleasure and Satisfaction to behold. And if there is as much of inward Sincerity, as outward Appearance; as much of Piety, as Devotion; if when our Hands and Eyes are in our Prayers uplifted to Heaven, our Hearts accompany; if our Repentance here, will be succeeded by a Reformation of Manners hereafter; if when we quit this sacred Place, we do not forget the Promises now made; and leave our Goodness behind us; then the present Meeting will prove a Blessing to us. But if from a Regard to Decency only, we abstain from Folly and Vanity for a Day; if when this Day is finished, we return again to our old Ways; if Luxury, Extravagance, and Intemperance still continue, and our vicious Passions and Desires are not abated, but urge us on to unlawful Gratifications, what can we expect will be the End of such Hypocrisy and Dissimulation, but Infamy and Ruin?

But of you, my Brethren, we hope better Things. We have Reason to believe from your Attendance at other Times, that you have not now assembled yourselves in Obe-

Obedience to one Part of the Royal Edict, without any Intention of performing the other, *of becoming better Men.* And if we are in Want of the Assistance of Heaven, and want it we should, if we had a less powerful Adversary to deal with, this is the only Method to be pursued to procure it. We have known and sensibly felt, that it is not in our Power to command Success; but let us by a Return to Virtue deserve it. Then if Misfortunes happen, it will be a comfortable Reflection, that they are not the Effect of our Follies, brought upon us by a justly incensed Deity: Then though the first Events of War have proved unsuccessful, the Issue of it may be prosperous; then Peace and Plenty may again visit this once happy Isle, the horrid Noise of War, and the piteous Complaints of Want cease.

You may here ask, do you speak seriously? Are we really in an alarming and dangerous Situation? If you form a Judgment of the Times from the general Behaviour of the People, you might indeed doubt. For do we abate any Thing of our publick Diversions and Entertainments? Does not the Wine still sparkle at our Feasts? Have the Instruments of Musick ceased from playing? Is the Voice of the Singers no more heard;

or

or are the Feet of the Dancers ſtill? Are the Comic Scenes ſhut up, whilſt the Tragedy of War is acting over Europe? Are Religious Aſſemblies, the Schools of Piety, more frequented, and publick Houſes, the Places of Riot and Intemperance, the Bane of Induſtry, the Ruin of Families, leſs reſorted to? Do not Folly and Extravagance reign as much now, as in the Time of the moſt profound Peace?

Is it not ſhameful and diſhonourable to hear the perpetual Murmurings of the People againſt the heavy Load of Taxes, and the additional Weight of more, now neceſſary for the Support and carrying on the War, and to ſee them, how laviſh, how profuſe in every Thing, that may adminiſter Pleaſure, ſooth and flatter their Pride and Vanity?

We make our Boaſt of Liberty, and juſtly. If we have a real Value for it, let us at leaſt for a Time lay aſide our Pleaſures, and appropriate a Part of the immenſe Sums they conſume in the Support and Preſervation of it. The contrary Behaviour ſhews us to be little better than Fools or Madmen; to be no longer worthy of being free; and fit only for thoſe Shackles, which

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the Enemy, we lately imagined, were preparing for us.

How unlike to the noble Spirit of the Roman Matrons, who, when their Country was engaged in an expenſive War and in great Diſtreſs for Money, cheerfully and voluntarily preſented the State with their Jewels, and moſt valuable Ornaments. Oh! that ſuch a Spirit reigned amongſt us; that we had ſuch a juſt and high Senſe of the Liberty we enjoy, as to convert Pomp, Splendor, Magnificence, Equipage and Dreſs to the public Uſe, when it wants all that we can give; when we have Enemies at home, not leſs dangerous than thoſe abroad: The Deſigns of both being equally fatal to the Cauſe of Liberty.

When we ſee Perſons at this Time making a ſplendid Appearance, it muſt remind us of the Behaviour of the Emperor Nero, who was pleaſed and delighted, when he ſaw the City of Rome on Fire. Do not ſuch ſeem ready to grace the Triumph of the Conqueror, who are now unwilling to lend Aſſiſtance, and take Pleaſure when their Country is in Affliction and Diſtreſs? With what juſt Indignation muſt every true Lover of his Country ſee the Rich and Powerful lolling in their gilded Chariots at

Eaſe, revelling and banquetting, faring elegantly and ſumptuouſly every Day, at a Time when the Poor is periſhing for Want; the induſtrious Artizan and Labourer hardly procuring a bare Support for his neceſſitous Family; when we are threatened with the Sword from abroad, and a Famine at home; when our Arms have been unſucceſsfully employed, and our Councils are diſtracted and diſconcerted by the Spirit of Faction and Malevolence; when through Neglect or Imprudence we have become a Scorn and Deriſion to our Neighbours; our Name once reſpected and eſteemed, now inſulted and deſpiſed; and Britons, once eminent for their Piety, their Virtue, their Valour, are diſtinguiſhing themſelves from other Nations by Impiety, Immorality, Cowardice. But if Folly and Extravagance prevail amongſt the Great, how much do they abound amongſt thoſe of inferior Rank? If criminal in the one, how much more in the other? as they have leſs Support; and not only bring Diſtreſs and Miſery upon themſelves, but involve an innocent Family in the unhappy Conſequences.

That a Reformation of Manners is wanted, the little Appearance of Virtue ſhews: A Reformation which all good and

pious

pious Men wiſh to ſee ſoon accompliſhed; for the Honour of God and the Proſperity of their Country: Unleſs a due Attention is paid to the former in the Practice of the Duties of Religion, we cannot promiſe ourſelves a long Enjoyment of the latter.

God has expreſſly declared, that thoſe who honour him, he will honour, and thoſe who deſpiſe him, ſhall be lightly eſteemed. This Declaration has been remarkably exemplified in the utter Ruin and Deſtruction of Nations, greater and more powerful than ours; whoſe Foundation ſeemed to have been ſo immoveably fixed, as neither to fear, nor expect their Diſſolution. What Security then have we againſt the ſame unhappy Event? Are we more pious, more virtuous, more honeſt? We have Reaſon to believe the contrary. If they ſuffered for their Wickedneſs, how ſhall we eſcape? Not by continuing in vicious Practices, but by Repentance and Amendment of Life? without which there can be no Safety nor Security: It is weak to think of, or expect it. Then we may be confident, but not now; for we are far from being good; happy for us if our Wickedneſs is not ſo great, as to have made our Diſſolution nearer than imagined. To prevent it we have Time. The

Power is lodged in ourſelves. A good Life will recommend us to the divine Favour and Protection. The Reaſons why you ſhould ſo live, it is needleſs to mention, for you know them; private Happineſs, the Honour of Religion, the Welfare of your Country demand and depend upon it.

It is impoſſible, therefore it would be Preſumption for any one to determine, when a Nation is ſo wicked as to be an Object of divine Vengeance; that is a Secret to all but Omniſcience, and thoſe to whom God in a ſpecial Manner reveals it. But by comparing the Manners of the preſent with former Times, a reaſonable Conjecture may be formed. If then there was now more of Virtue and leſs of Vice; more Piety and leſs Hypocriſy; more Honeſty and leſs Fraud; more of Frugality and Temperance and leſs of Luxury and Extravagance, we ſhould be entirely free from any ſuch terrible Appreſion.

As no Events can happen without the Knowledge and Permiſſion of the Supreme Being, and as he puniſhes national Wickedneſs by Diſappointments and Misfortunes, may we not, free from Superſtition and Weakneſs, impute our paſt Loſſes and Miſcarriages to the divine Diſpleaſure? For though

though we cannot certainly ſay, that our Vices have been the Cauſe, yet of this, I think, we may be confident, that we are not ſo good, as to merit any extraordinary Interpoſition in our Favour. How little we honour God, and therefore how little we deſerve to be honoured by him, let our Impiety, our Prophaneneſs and Intemperance, (which laſt Vice daily increaſes, notwithſtanding the ſalutary Laws made, as appears from the Increaſe of the Diſtillery, and the vaſt Conſumption of ſpirituous Liquors) let theſe Vices, with many others, commonly practiſed, publicly known, be a Teſtimony of our Merit.

If God then will only ſhew Favour to thoſe, who obſerve and practiſe his Laws; if we really ſtand in need of, and by our Virtues we may procure it; if by the contrary Behaviour we ſhall not only forfeit it, but incur the divine Diſpleaſure, what ſhall I ſay to influence you to the Performance of your Duty? Your Preſence here ſhews, that you are fully convinced of the Obligation to perform it, and of the Neceſſity at this Time to act with Sincerity. Have you a Regard for the Welfare and Proſperity of your Country? I am perſuaded you muſt have. That it may be happy and proſpe-

rous, be you honeſt and good; encourage others to be ſo by your own Example, and beſtow your Favours only upon thoſe who are.

What Motive can be uſed to perſuade the Wicked to repent, which they themſelves are not acquainted with? For we live in an Age, when Men are more wiſe than good; when they do not want ſo much to be informed of their Duty, as to practiſe it; that being ſo plainly revealed, that few, if any, can be ignorant of it. Shall I urge Repentance as a Duty? They acknowledge it. Shall I ſay, that they cannot be happy without it? They have experienced its Truth. Shall I ſet before them the Vengeance of God exerciſed upon ſinful Nations? They know it. Shall I tell them, that ſuch may be the Fate of this Kingdom? They believe it. Shall I preſs a Return to Virtue and Goodneſs as the only Way of preventing it? They allow it. Shall I diſplay the unhappy Conſequence of Sin in the next Life? They know and dread it.

What then ſhall we ſay to provoke them to be good? If the Senſe of their own Miſeries cannot prevail, what Influence can Religion, or the public Good be ſuppoſed

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to have? Shall I mention the preſent afflicted State of their Country, groaning under the Weight of Taxes, engaged in an expenſive and dangerous War, rent and torn by inteſtine Feuds and Contentions? Can they ſee their Country, for the Preſervation of which the Blood of their Anceſtors was ſo profuſely, but not ignobly, ſhed, thus expoſed and diſtreſſed? Can they ſuffer the Purity and Simplicity of their Religion to be again corrupted and adulterated by Romiſh Idolatry and Superſtition, for the Defence of which the Fires were ſo often kindled, and Smithfield ſo often ſmoaked with human Sacrifices, the Sport of blind Zeal, the Feaſt of Popiſh Cruelty? Should not the Senſe of theſe alarming and impending Dangers raiſe in us a juſt Indignation againſt the Enemies of our happy Conſtitution? Should we not, from a Senſe of the invaluable Bleſſings enjoyed by it, rouzed and animated by the noble Examples of our Anceſtors, reſolutely maintain and defend our Rights, our Property, our Liberty, our Religion, or elſe greatly fall? Should we not, to procure their martial Spirit, undaunted Courage and Reſolution, the Protection of themſelves, the Terror of their Enemies; ſhould we not lay aſide our Vices,

be in Union amongſt ourſelves, and in Friendſhip with God? Then let the Enemy invade, we ſhall be prepared to receive him; we may be alarmed, but not diſmayed; and whatſoever the Event will be, we ſhall live or die a religious, a brave, a free People. But ſo long as we continue vicious, at Enmity with God, and at Variance with each other, every little Loſs or Diſappointment makes us uneaſy; we are fearful, irreſolute; we neither plan with Judgment nor execute with Vigour; and the Enemy is rather victorious through our own Foibles, Timidity and Diſſentions, than by his Bravery, his Courage or Virtue.

I ſay not theſe Things to diſcourage, but to convince you, of what every one, who thinks ſeriouſly, is before-hand apprized and acknowledges, the Neceſſity and Uſefulneſs of a Reformation of Manners; without which there can be no true Enjoyment of Life. All that Wealth, Power and Grandeur can give, will not make you happy, if your Conſcience is defiled with Guilt. Your Actions to others may be unknown, but to yourſelf they can be no Secret. There, there you muſt feel Trouble and Uneaſineſs. You may conceal and diſguiſe it from the World, but you cannot fly from your-

ſelf.

ſelf. You can be no Stranger to what paſſes within. Pleaſures may for a Time amuſe, Buſineſs prevent, and Company divert Reflection; but when Pleaſures have been enjoyed, Buſineſs is over, Company gone, and you alone, then ſerious Thoughts will obtrude themſelves; you cannot avoid them. O Conſcience, Conſcience, how great thy Power over the Mind of Man! Happy thoſe who are Strangers to thy Terrors.

All the Pleaſure and Satisfaction received in the Practice of Vice (if that can be call'd Pleaſure, which ends in Poverty and Diſeaſe, or that be deemed a Satisfaction, which is done in Diſobedience to the divine Commands, and ſtamps Infamy and Diſgrace on human Nature) all the Pleaſure and Satisfaction received, will not equal the Uneaſineſs left upon the Mind. This the Wicked are conſcious of; and though weak enough to commit thoſe Actions, which bring it upon them, yet, after Commiſſion, they muſt wiſh to be releaſed from it, and confeſs that their whole Lives have been an alternate Scene of Pleaſure and Pain, of Vanity and Vexation of Spirit. If not before, yet at the Time of their Diſſolution they will acknowledge a Life of Virtue to be the only certain Way of acquiring true

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Happineſs, and that he, who deviates from it, in Search after Happineſs elſewhere, is bewildered in a Maze of Error and Confuſion, which unavoidably terminates in Miſery and Ruin.

If then the Practice of Virtue and Goodneſs is neceſſary to render us happy in private Life, it is equally neceſſary to promote and advance the Happineſs of the Public. No State can long exiſt, which has baniſhed Honeſty and Religion out of it. It will be either divided againſt itſelf by Faction and Party, enſlaved and oppreſſed by the Avarice and Ambition of domeſtic, or expoſed to the Inſolence and Depredation of foreign Enemies.

Permit me here to mention two principal Evils, which have too long ſubſiſted with equal Prejudice to Religion and the State; and unleſs they are removed, in vain is a Reformation attempted, in vain ſhall we endeavour to be an happy and religious People: From them are moſt of our national Calamities, through them have Immorality and Irreligion gained ground. The Evils complained of, are Bribery and Corruption, and Party Spirit.

And firſt as to Bribery and Corruption. Is it not notorious to every one, that moſt

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of the Places of Profit and Truſt have been ſhamefully diſpoſed of to the higheſt Bidder? Have Preferments been made according to Merit and Ability? Have you not known many preferred through the Power of Faction, to ſtrengthen the Intereſt of Party, or oblige Friends at the Expence of the Publick, and to the rejecting Strangers, though more deſerving. Is there any Thing to be procured but by this wretched Mean? All cry out, inveigh and exclaim againſt it, yet how ſmall the Number of thoſe, who practiſe it not? Is there ſcarce a Place of the moſt trifling Profit, if of a publick Kind, but Threatenings are uſed, Promiſes made to gain Intereſt? How many Perſons through Fear of loſing, or the Hope of procuring Intereſt, have voted contrary to their private Sentiments, I might have ſaid voted unjuſtly, contrary to their Conſcience?

So general is this Vice, that an honeſt and good Man knows not how to ſollicit a Favour, and when procured, if he nicely examines into the Means, muſt with Reluctance accept of and enjoy it. Hence it is, that many Places are filled with Perſons without Credit or without Ability. And when Credit and Ability are united, you will

will find that ſuch Elections have generally proceeded from abſolute Neceſſity, not Choice.

What Motives ſhall I make Uſe of to diſſuade Men from a Vice ſo pernicious to the public good? We fear that all Advice is vain, from the open Manner in which Bribery has of late Years appeared; not as heretofore under the Maſk of Friendſhip, but as a publick Bargain in both Giver and Receiver, without any Regard to Decency, any Senſe of Shame, any Regard to Conſcience: So that Electors will not vote, nor can the Candidates ſucceed, without a Bribe given before, or promiſed after the Election. So little of true Honour and Honeſty reign amongſt us.

What can be ſaid to Men, who make a publick Sale of their Property, their Liberty, their Country; who ſacrifice their Conſcience, their Religion, all that is dear and valuable for a Morſel of Bread and a Cup of ſtrong Drink? If the Senſe of the Bleſſings they enjoy, cannot influence them to act like Men, like Engliſhmen, we muſt ſay that they deſerve to loſe them; ſuch Wretches, for it is diſgracing human Nature to call them Men, are fit only to be made Slaves, to be ſold and betrayed by

thoſe,

thoſe, whom they entruſt with their Rights and Privileges.

Beſides the Evil of Bribery and Corruption, there is another not leſs deſtructive to the Peace and Happineſs of the Nation, I mean Party Spirit; by which Jealouſies, Animoſities, Hatred, Strife and Variance are encouraged, under the ſpecious Pretence of ſerving our Country: How do Men of baſe Principles, and the moſt infamous Characters proſper, are highly eſtemed and careſſed, only becauſe they are loud and noiſy in Defence of, or Oppoſition to Opinions, which they do not underſtand. They concur with all Meaſures, right or wrong; will labour to palliate, excuſe, even defend the moſt palpable Villainy, rather than the Intereſt of their Party ſhould ſuffer. From the ſame baſe Spirit it is, that we think all to be in the wrong, who differ from us; and that no one really and truly loves his Country but ourſelves. Hence alſo we thwart and oppoſe the Deſigns of the contrary Party when good, leſt they ſhould be ſuperior to us in Power, and thought capable of ſerving the Public better. Thus our Country is torn and rent aſunder; moſt aſtoniſhing, almoſt incredible, by thoſe who ſtile themſelves its Friends!

Alas!

Alas! our Foes may be frugal of their Blood and Treaſure; they need not attempt to invade us, nor need the Hand of the Almighty be ſtretched out againſt us to puniſh us for our Wickedneſs and Impiety; for if theſe private and domeſtic Contentions continue, we muſt, e're long, become an eaſy Prey to our Enemies, be an unhappy and miſerable People, or like the Jews of old, we ſhall butcher and maſſacre each other.

It is now Time to lay aſide theſe Party Differences (for the Support of which, what Miſeries are there, which this Nation has not ſeverely felt?) to have none other Name than that of Britons: A Name once terrible to the Enemy, but now contemptible thro' our Follies and Diviſions. Let us then be at Union amongſt ourſelves. Let the good Man, whoſoever he is, be encouraged; the bad, let neither his Wealth nor Power ſcreen and protect him, be puniſhed; it is not the Time for trifling. Let us not, when our Country wants all the Aſſiſtance we can give it by the Steadineſs and Unanimity of our Councils, as well as Conduct and Courage, let us not be divided, nor oppoſe, nor counter-act the Deſigns of thoſe Perſons, who are acting for the public Good, becauſe

cauſe of a different Party. It ſhould not be any Concern to us what they are, ſo long as they continue to act well. What Matter is it by whom the Public is ſerved, if it is ſerved? I think there can be no greater Proof of a baſe and mean Soul than this; when Men cannot blame the Conduct of Perſons in Power, they ſhould endeavour to aſperſe and vilify Characters by them inimitable, and beſtow upon them the invidious Appellation of Whig or Tory, in order to render them odious to the Public, raiſe and encourage Suſpicions that the ſerving of the People is the Veil, through which they intend to gratify their Pride, their Vanity, or Ambition.

To conclude,

If we are really affected with the unhappy Situation of our Country; if we are deſirous of reviving its ancient Grandeur and Power; let us heartily and ſincerely repent, in order to procure the divine Favour, of our manifold Sins and Iniquities; let us diſcountenance Bribery and Corruption; let us diſdain a Bribe ourſelves, and endeavour to have the Laws executed againſt thoſe, who are baſe enough to accept it; let us know of no Diſtinctions amongſt

mongſt us; let Party Names and Differences, civil and religious, be for ever buried in Oblivion.

If you are met here with Reſolutions of Amendment, you will act agreeably to the Advice now given. I am perſuaded that you are convinced of the Neceſſity of it, and therefore let us pray God, that from this Time our national Sins and Grievances be every Day leſſened, till we become an happy and religious People.

The Third Sunday in ADVENT.

St. MATTHEW, CHAP. iii. V. 2.

" Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven " is at hand."

IT was the peculiar Deſignation of John the Baptiſt to exhort the Jews, who had little more than the Form of Religion, to repent of their Diſſimulation and correct their Manners, that they might be thereby prepared for a worthy Reception of Chriſt's Doctrine, and ſo become entitled to the Benefits of his Paſſion. Exhortations to Repentance are not leſs uſeful and neceſſary now, than they were at that Time. Chriſtians practiſe as little of the Goſpel, as the Jews did of the Law. As they had but few of the Virtues, for which their Anceſtors the Patriarchs were emi-

nent, ſo we are but little troubled with the Piety, that adorned the primitive Chriſtians. To recover Religion from its degenerate State, in Imitation of the Baptiſt, I ſhall endeavour to ſhew the Folly and Danger of Sin, by offering ſome Reaſons as Inducements to perform the important Work of Repentance.

The firſt is, That we are mortal. We muſt die, though we know not when. Small is the Space between us and the Grave. As ſoon as we begin to be, we begin not to be. Every Hour draws nearer the Period of Exiſtence, and we ſcarce know, what Time is, before we ſlip into Eternity. When we count ourſelves the moſt ſecure, we are oftentimes in the moſt imminent Danger; and when we think that we have many Years to live, we may have but a Day, an Hour, not a Moment: So precarious and uncertain is Life, that nothing can enſure its Continuance for the ſhorteſt Term. Inſtances of ſudden Death are frequent and alarming. Can we then begin the Duty of Repentance too ſoon? May we not from the Variety of Accidents unknown and unexpected, to which we are expoſed, be deprived of the Power, unleſs we embrace the preſent Opportunity?

For

For he that propoſes ſo ſoon to repent as To-morrow, has no Security that he ſhall live till Night. Many have been thus deceived, who had promiſed themſelves a long Enjoyment of Life. The ſame Fate may attend us; there is no guarding againſt it. Is it not then imprudent to run the Riſk, when the Conſequence is of ſuch Importance? Happineſs or Miſery, not finite, but eternal, is the unavoidable Lot hereafter. Granting, that but one in a thouſand thus dies, yet is it not ſafe for you to delay Repentance, unleſs you could be aſſured of an Impoſſibility, that you ſhall not be that Perſon. This Inſtant of Time call your own; the next may be the Grave's: Therefore to die prepared, prepared you muſt live.

If your Warning is not ſo ſhort, yet it may be too ſhort to perform a neceſſary and ſatisfactory Repentance. Converſion is not to be wrought in a Moment. The Sinner cannot immediately become the Saint. A perfect no more than a vicious Character is to be completed in a Day. Vices, like ill Weeds, are with Difficulty rooted up. The Soil muſt be well manured and cultivated, before the Seeds of Virtue can be properly and ſucceſsfully ſown. Religion is not the Buſineſs of a few Hours, but of the whole

Life. Piety is not leſs incumbent upon Youth to practiſe, than old Age, nor Devotion of leſs Concern in Health, than when afflicted with Sickneſs. A Death-bed is an unfit Time for the Practice of Piety and Devotion: The Grief and Sorrow of thoſe around us, the Violence of the Diſorder and Diſeaſe laboured under, the Agony and Torture of a guilty Conſcience, the Fears, the Hopes, the Terrors, which will accompany us in that unhappy Situation, muſt neceſſarily diſcompoſe and diſorder the Mind. But allowing the Caſe to be different, what Reaſon have we for believing, that we, who neglect thoſe Duties till that Period, ſhall, by ſuch an Obſervance, merit Acceptance and obtain the Pardon of our Sins? For is there any Virtue in giving up thoſe Vices, which we cannot retain, have loſt the Senſe of reliſhing, or are deprived of the Power of enjoying? Is a Compliance with the divine Commands to be accounted Piety, when it proceeds from an abſolute Neceſſity; when we cannot, if willing, tranſgreſs them? What Goodneſs to abſtain from Sins, at a Time when we cannot, tho' the Opportunity ſhould be favourable, indulge ourſelves in them? Is not the Life of the Chriſtian to be wholly ſpent in the Ser-

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vice of God? What vain Hopes of Happineſs then muſt he entertain, who having ſacrificed his Health and Strength to his Luſts, has kept in Reſerve the very Dregs of his Days for the Honour of his Creator? Such Perſons as this love God, becauſe they fear him; and dare not, though they have lived, to die wickedly. What Treatment ſuch a Repentance will meet with in the next World, it would be Preſumption to determine. We wiſh that the Sinner's Expectations may be anſwered by it, but would adviſe him not to reſt his future Happineſs upon ſuch a weak and dangerous Foundation, which is inconſiſtent with his own Reaſon, and ſeems to be unwarranted by Scripture. But even ſuppoſing, what we cannot be ſure of, that ſuch a light and forced Repentance as this ſhould be ſatisfactory; can they promiſe themſelves, that a ſudden Death, ſo common of late, ſhall not deprive them of the Means, or that an unexpected Calamity and Accident (of which there are many and various) ſhall not inſtantly diſorder the Mind, and render them incapable of performing it? Theſe Conſiderations often thought of and ſeriouſly conſidered, might render us ſuperior to any dangerous Temp-

tation, at leaſt would prevent us from running ſuch a Length in Sin, as upon Reflection might make us deſpair of obtaining Mercy, and render Repentance uſeleſs.

Not leſs weak and ridiculous is the Behaviour of thoſe, who proceed in a conſtant Alternative of ſinning and repenting; who for every Offence drop a penitential Tear, and imagine that God muſt forgive, when they are pleaſed to intercede for Forgiveneſs. Such may go on in this trifling Manner, in ſinning and repenting, till they can ſin and repent no longer: And what will then be their Lot? Chriſtian Charity indeed forbids us to ſay, that they are miſerable; yet we may venture to affirm, that their Condition cannot be the beſt, nor the ſafeſt. Such a Conduct ſeems to be an exact Imitation of the ancient Jews, who in the Time of the Prophet Elijah mixed ſacred with profane Worſhip, and offered the ſame Adoration to them, who were no Gods, as to the true and living God: It is compounding the Matter between God and our Luſts, as doubting whom it was beſt to ſerve: It is nicely copying after the Example of Judas, whoſe Heart was divided between Duty and Intereſt; who pretended to have a great Value for his Maſter, at the very Inſtant

ſtant he betrayed him: Whoſe fatal End may read an uſeful Leſſon of Inſtruction to thoſe, who are guilty of the ſame Diſſimulation; who think it ſufficient to ſerve Chriſt by Fits and Starts; are all Heats and Colds as it ſuits their Purpoſes, and imagine that they live and die very good, becauſe they do not live and die very wicked.

A ſecond Motive to Repentance is, that a Day of Retribution will come; that we die to live, and only change this World for another. The preſent is prepatory to another State; wherein our Actions here will be productive of everlaſting Happineſs or Miſery. As there is no eſcaping Death here, ſo there will be no doing Juſtice hereafter. If then we chuſe to be happy, we muſt endeavour to be innocent; if guilty, Miſery is the Portion: For Salvation cannot be conferred upon thoſe, who ſeek not after, and ſet no Value on it.

It is not more our Duty, than it is our Intereſt to practiſe Religion: For if falſe, it can be of no Prejudice to us hereafter; but if true, its Reward is ineſtimably great. Suppoſing a future State to be barely probable, which all allow it to be; (for it is equally as certain that I ſhall exiſt, as that I ſhall not exiſt hereafter, and he that doubts of it, can never be ſatisfied till he is

dead) Prudence even in this dubious Caſe obliges me to ſubſcribe to that Opinion, which has the leaſt Danger in it, and will turn out greatly to my Advantage, if true. There is this Comfort and Conſolation in it, that at the worſt, if there ſhould be nothing hereafter, by acting agreeably to Duty, we have lived like Men, if we fall like Beaſts; but if there ſhould, by omitting it, we have not only played the Fool in this, but made ourſelves miſerable in the next World.

That we were deſigned for ſomething more than a mere Exiſtence here, is an Opinion conſiſtent with Reaſon: If otherwiſe, Man, who is made capable of greater Degrees of Happineſs than any Being in this World, would be the moſt unhappy Being in it; ſince every other Thing that has Exiſtence enjoys, what he cannot now arrive at, the Perfection of its Nature. Perfect Happineſs is not to be obtained by him. No one has been, is now, or ever will be free from Trouble, Diſquiet and Uneaſineſs. Name or point out the Man, however well circumſtanced in Life, however affluent his Fortune, however extenſive his Power, however generous in the Diſtribution of the one, impartial, juſt and humane in the Adminiſtration of the other;

ſuch a one ſure, if any one can be, is happy? But he will not ſay, that he is without his Troubles, the Portion of all the Sons of Adam. But can it be thought, that God made us to be miſerable? No. Can Happineſs be obtained here? No. There will then be another State, wherein that Happineſs will be enjoyed. Life, without ſomething future, would not be worth the Poſſeſſion.

But if a future Exiſtence is uncertain, it may be urged as a Weakneſs to quit the Enjoyment of thoſe Pleaſures, which are certain, for an imaginary Fear of Puniſhment. Let us not be ſo much the Enemies to our own Good, as to put the Cheat upon ourſelves; for all this is but fanſied Happineſs; ſenſual Pleaſures yielding but a momentary Satisfaction; frequently expiring in Pain, Diſeaſe, Poverty or Contempt. The Acquiſition is not leſs uncertain, than the Poſſeſſion ſhort. A numberleſs Variety of Incidents occur to retard, obſtruct and prevent the Fruition of our Deſires. A Man muſt take great Pains to make himſelf miſerable; he may at the laſt be diſappointed, even when he thinks himſelf the moſt ſecure of obtaining his Views. What then is it but giving up one Uncertainty in Reverſion for another? Which ought

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to have the Lead, let common Senſe determine; for in the latter, if miſtaken, we cannot be miſerable, and if in the right, we muſt be happy; but in the former we may not only be baffled in the Purſuit of our Prey, but when caught, the Reliſh nauſeates, the Appetite is palled, and our Fondneſs ſoon changed into an Averſion.

The above Plea, plauſible as it may ſeem to be in Youth, is abſurd in old Age. They can only doat and dream of thoſe viſionary Scenes of Pleaſure, which they cannot partake of. The ſhort Time they have to live, and the Infirmities they labour under, which render a Gratification of their vicious Paſſions impracticable, ſhould be a Kind of Monitor to them, to think of preparing and providing for another State, if precarious. But a future State is not ſo uncertain, if any Credit may be given to divine Truth. Scripture is ſo full, clear and expreſs to the Point, that it leaves even Ignorance without Excuſe. It effectually removes all Doubts, diſſipates all Fears, ſtrengthens and confirms all our Hopes in Regard to this important Truth.

When Friends forſake, Riches fail, Pleaſures become inſipid, and Life ſeems tedious and burdenſome, then Religion comforts

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and ſupports the good Man; then Guilt and Reflection fill the Minds of the wicked with Dread and Terror. Add to all theſe Misfortunes, Pain, Sickneſs, Death. What Conſolation do the Good find at the laſt ſolemn and aweful Hour? What Doubts, Fears, what Agonies aſſault and trouble the Wicked, when no Hopes of Life remain, when Art and Medicine are uſeleſs and unneceſſary? He then ſees the Folly and Weakneſs of Sin; he ſuſpects Futurity; he imagines it to be poſſible; even looks upon it to be probable; he hopes, he wiſhes, he deſires it may prove a Lie; he dreads, he fears and imagines it may be true, and dies. Is Vice then leſs than Madneſs? Will a Man venture his future Happineſs upon a mere Poſſibility? Will he expoſe himſelf to future Miſery, becauſe it may be poſſible, even probable, that there will be no future State? Conſult your Reaſon, look into common Life, and you will find and account thoſe to be the moſt prudent and diſcreet, who guard againſt, ſo far as they are able, every Inconvenience and Danger even in Appearance, though they may never happen. Shall Men ſhew ſo much Prudence and Diſcretion in Temporal Things, whoſe Poſſeſſion and Enjoyment are momentary, and appear negligent

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and unconcerned about Futurity? Eſpecially when they acknowledge, that if there ſhould be a future Exiſtence, they muſt be miſerable in it; and allow that the Arguments offered in Favour of it are more in Number, more reaſonable, powerful and juſt, than any that have been produced againſt it. It is not the Offspring of Revelation, but the Voice of Nature, of Reaſon, and of every Man's Conſcience. The Thoughts of it may be diverted, the Fears of it ſtifled, but its Truth cannot be denied, nor its Falſhood proved. The beſt, the greateſt, the wiſeſt have in all Ages believed and maintained it; the wicked, the fooliſh, the unjuſt have always dreaded and feared it.

A Third Motive to Repentance is, that the Conditions upon which our future Happineſs is to depend, are eaſy to be complied with. More favourable they could not have been, had we framed and deviſed them. Perfect Obedience is not expected, that being what in this imperfect State, can never, if aimed at, be attained. What can be done, is exacted; more than that is not required.

Religion does not deny us the Uſe of any Thing; and the Practice of it will make us as happy as we can be in this preſent Situation. What can a reaſonable Being wiſh

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for or desire more? The Precepts it lays down for our moral Conduct are few and comprehensive; not less suited to the Weakness of our Nature, than fit to exalt it by Degrees to that Perfection, which it is hereafter to receive. If we are willing, we shall find no great Difficulty in the Performance: so that there is more Occasion to admire the Gentleness, than complain of the Severity of Religion; more Reason to celebrate the Supreme Being, for the Lenity and Mildness with which he treats us, than to murmure and repine, as if, like the Ægyptian Task-masters, he had expected Impossibilities.

Cannot a Man be happy, if he is religious? Must he then give up all the Comforts and Enjoyments of this Life? Must he retire to the Desert, or be shut up in a Convent? May he not please, though not indulge his Senses? May he not amuse, divert and entertain himself? Is he deprived of the Liberty of any Thing worth enjoying, or prohibited any Enjoyment, which does not tend to debauch the Mind, or injure the Constitution? And are such Prohibitions unjust or unreasonable, which prevent us from becoming mean, little, and contemptible? For he that drinks away his

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Subſtance, ſquanders it away upon a Miſtreſs, or throws it away at a gaming Table, what does he acquire by theſe Fooleries, but Poverty, Diſeaſe, or Diſcontent? Would we then live comfortably here, and be happy hereafter? Let us be faithful and diligent in the Diſcharge of the Duties of Religion, and make the Scripture the Rule of our Actions; if not for its own Excellency, yet for our own Intereſt: For it is that alone, which gives the true Reliſh to all the Enjoyments of Life, and by that alone we are enabled to bear up againſt the Calamities of it. What Anxieties are there, which it cannot ſoften? What Misfortunes which it cannot ſupport us under? What Difficulties, which it cannot enable us to ſurmount? Why then do Men ſlight and neglect it? Why ſhould they not be fond of being religious, when they are deſirous of being ſo reputed? When they ſtudy ſo to appear, if they are not; when they commend and applaud thoſe who are; when they will neither truſt nor put any Confidence in thoſe who are not; when they are aſhamed of their Follies, and labour to conceal them; and when they publickly inveigh againſt, cenſure and condemn thoſe Vices of which they are privately guilty.

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There is not any Thing ſo valuable as the Poſſeſſion of a pure Conſcience; firſt or laſt it will be found the principal Good, and to have been the Object the moſt worthy of our Purſuit. When Sickneſs comes, then the Vanity of thoſe Things, in the Purchaſe of which we placed our Happineſs, immediately ſhews itſelf; Things then appear what they really are; and we can look down with Diſdain and Contempt upon the darling Pomp, Splendor and Pleaſure of the World; be ſurpriſed that we ſhould have miſtaken our trueſt Good, in courting ſuch empty Greatneſs, and think it ſcarcely credible, that we ſhould have been amuſed into our Ruin by mere Trifles. As much might be learnt, if ſeriouſly diſpoſed, before Experience has fatally convinced us of its Truth. It will then be too late to deſpiſe what we have no Property in; and it is an unhappy Reflection, that muſt produce Pain and Miſery with it.

The laſt Motive to Repentance is, that Vice, however varied and agreeable it may be, is at the beſt a gilded Poiſon, a bitter Sweet. It may yield Pleaſure for a Time, but when the Paſſion has been gratified, it is ſurfeited, and an inward Uneaſineſs is left behind. What Caution, what Care, what Circum-

Circumſpection is required to practiſe it, leſt a Reputation be ſullied, if not loſt, by a Diſcovery! Though practiſed in the moſt ſecret Manner, in Places the moſt diſtant from our Habitation, the leaſt frequented by our Acquaintance, and the moſt retired from publick Notice, how jealous and ſuſpicious, how fearful and uneaſy, leſt we ſhould be known to any, our Hypocriſy detected, and our Character ruined. Theſe, though great, are not the only Terrors that aſſault and trouble the guilty Mind. The Apprehenſion of ſomething hereafter does not a little terrify us, even in the Midſt of our Enjoyments. We cannot but fear a Hell, when acting as if there was none; and dread the divine Vengeance, at the ſame Inſtant we offend his Goodneſs.

Vice does not only exhibit a diſmal Proſpect hereafter, but has its Evils even in this Life; for it is not to be enjoyed without the Expence of Time, Health and Fortune. Can any one be a Stranger to the Miſery and Diſtreſs, which Vice, ſooner or later, conſtantly rewards her Votaries with? Can any one be ignorant of the Poverty and Want, the Shame and Contempt, the Infamy and Diſgrace, which a too free Indulgence of the Paſſions occaſions? Have

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you not ſeen theſe unhappy Effects in others? Have not many experienced them in themſelves? It is, indeed, true, that we may practiſe Vice with Security and little Inconvenience; but it muſt not be expected, that thus it will always be, as at the firſt. If not in the Strength of Youth, yet in the Infirmity of old Age we ſhall ſenſibly feel the Conſequences, which flow from it. This Obſervation is verified by living Examples, by what you may daily ſee: From whence come Dropſies, Conſumptions, Gout, Inflammations, &c.? Come they not principally from Intemperance? Are not the Seeds of theſe Diſeaſes ſown in our youthful Days? So that if we eſcape Death then, which Numbers do not, yet, at the laſt, when unable to bear Affliction, and moſtly wanting Comfort, we ſhall then be afflicted moſt. This is now the unhappy Situation of many, and will be the Condition of all, who follow the ſame or any other Vice. So that if we gain nothing hereafter by being virtuous, yet we are certainly much the better for it here; if Health and Eaſe, Peace of Mind and a ſound Conſtitution, may be reckoned Benefits.

To conclude,

As neither Strength nor Vigour of Conſtitution can enſure Life, but die we muſt, however unwilling to ſubmit to the Stroke; as there is a ſet Day appointed, when we ſhall ſeverally render an Account of our Behaviour here, and accordingly as we have obſerved or deviated from the divine Law given, we ſhall be rewarded or puniſhed; ſince to be virtuous is to be happy, and to be vicious is to be miſerable; ſince all the Enjoyments here, after a ſtated Term of Years, muſt either leave us or we them: As all theſe Things are unqueſtionably true, which even the Enemies of Revelation have ſo much Modeſty, if they diſpute, not to deny; Who, and where is he, that wants Motives to lead a good Life, or needs Perſuaſives to quit a bad one? Let a Man ſit down and ſeriouſly meditate upon theſe Matters, and then let him be wicked, if he can. Gratitude to the Creator, Self-Intereſt, and what is held dearer than either, Self-Love, will powerfully engage the Affections. The genuine Source of Vice is Inconſiderateneſs; for no one that ever duly attended to the Nature and Conſequence

quence of Sin, could preſumptuouſly offend. Let it then be our Care rightly to inform ourſelves of our Duty, and we ſhall not only ſee the Folly of tranſgreſſing it in the Puniſhment annexed, but the Wiſdom of obeying in the Reward it will confer.

The good and bad EFFECTS *of* PLAYS.

EPHESIANS, CHAP. v. V. 6.

" Let no Man deceive you with vain " Words."

THE Uſe to be made of theſe Words will, I fear, meet with an unwelcome Reception. This at firſt was a Diſcouragement from writing upon a Subject, which, if neceſſary, would be diſagreeable. It is, however, grave and ſerious, and therefore may deſerve Attention: Though, if we have reſpect to the Manners of the Times, and the prevailing Taſte of Gaiety and Pleaſure, it will ſtand in need of an Apology to recommend it.

The Subject to be discussed, is the Tendency of bad Plays, to debauch, vitiate and corrupt our Morals. That what shall be advanced, may be received without Prejudice, and have a proper Weight and Influence, permit me to say somewhat in Favour of these Entertainments.

I am not of the Opinion, that it is criminal to be present, nor do I look upon it as a Virtue to be absent, when the Matter is good; neither is it a Sign of Guilt to be seen at a Playhouse, no more than it is a Proof of Holiness to be in a Church. A good Play is not only the most innocent Amusement, but the most instructive, most agreeable, and the most worthy of a rational Being. General Complaints against these or other publick Diversions, discover not an honest and just Zeal for Religion, but a Weakness of Understanding; for when conducted with Decency, and nothing is exhibited inconsistent with or offensive to good Sense and good Manners, they have their Uses: And if Abuses creep in, as undoubtedly they will, and do even in sacred Institutions, they should be corrected.

Though vicious Plays are acted, owing to a bad Taste in the Audience, not to the Fault of the Managers, are good Plays of

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no Service? If our Morals may be injured by the former, will they not be improved by the latter? They were, originally, designed to inspire Men with a Love of Virtue, and an ardent Desire for noble and heroic Actions; to set forth the dark Intrigues of Vice, and lay open the false Pleasures, with which she is apt to delude and captivate the Innocent and Unwary. If the Design is not evidently calculated to answer these good Purposes, if performed, the Fault is in the Superintendant, who has full Power to restrain and prohibit them; though the Audience is not less criminal, whose Disapprobation would prevent a Repetition. But is not the Reverse of this true? The former will not exercise the Power he has of restraining, because the Scenes exhibited are agreeable to the reigning Taste and Humour of the Age, and the People cannot express a Dislike and Aversion, for what their Actions approve and commend. This Observation Facts evince to be true; for the more vicious and immoral the Play, the more crowded the Audience; and a good one is rather frequented for fear their Sense and Judgment should be questioned, than from a Delicacy of Taste.

A melancholy Proof of the Depravity and Corruption of the preſent Times!

If the Intention of the Plot was always to expoſe the Deformity of Vice, and to diſplay the Beauty and Comelineſs of Virtue; if it was to lay open the ſeveral deplorable Scenes of Wretchedneſs and Miſery, in which the Paſſions, when indulged, are apt to involve Mankind, and to exhibit that Pleaſure and Satisfaction, which conſtantly attend them, when duly regulated; if the Heroe's Virtues ſhould be always rewarded, or their Vices, at the Concluſion, always meet with the deſerved Puniſhment, nothing could be more admirably adapted or more contribute to render Vice odious and infamous, and Virtue lovely and amiable. We ſhould then admire, and be influenced to practiſe the former, becauſe it would plainly appear to be our Intereſt, and avoid the Commiſſion of the latter, becauſe it is not only unworthy of a reaſonable Being, but evidently tends to make our Lives unhappy and miſerable.

When we ſee Merit advanced, and the Worthleſs degraded; when Honour and Reward attend the one, Infamy and Diſgrace the other; we ſhould be naturally ſtruck with a Deſire of Imitation. Then

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thoſe who covet to be great, when they found it to be the moſt certain Way to Promotion, would endeavour to be good; and not follow the little, mean, baſe Arts ſucceſsfully practiſed in the Drama, and which have been, by thoſe who have adhered to them out of it, too ſucceſsfully practiſed.

If the Stage was thus managed, to ſee a Play would not be hurtful, nor prejudicial, but uſeful and beneficial to Society; in inſtilling and recommending wholſome and ſalutary Precepts. Neither could it be of any Diſadvantage to Religion, ſince it would act conſiſtent with its Plan, in endeavouring to make Men wiſer and better, by expoſing Vice and Folly in ſuch a Manner as to render them as ridiculous, as they ought to be contemptible. But if Gravity and Seriouſneſs were introduced upon the Stage, if we may judge from the Manners of the Age, it would be as much deſerted, as the Church now is. The Doors would not be thronged by a Multitude without, when nothing was to be ſeen or heard within to gratify, but to cenſure their Vanity; nothing to humour, but to condemn their Follies.

This is not the preſent Situation of the Stage. Virtue frequently appears in the utmoſt Diſtreſs, and Vice proſperous; Suc-

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ceſs attends the one, Misfortunes the other. The moſt fortunate are thoſe of bad Morals, of worſe Principles; and the good Man is often burleſqued and abuſed. In many Plays, the moſt ſhining Characters are Rakes and Debauchees. Chaſtity and Modeſty introduced by the Poet, and repreſented by the Actor as Subjects fit only for Banter and Ridicule: And ſuch Scenes of Lewdneſs, both in Word and Action, publickly exhibited, which Decency forbids me to mention, as can be only paralelled in a Stew. And yet ſuch Scenes the Chriſtian applauds; Scenes which would have made an Heathen bluſh and retire, are longed for and deſired, yield Pleaſure and Delight to the Chriſtian; and what would have rendered an Actor infamous and odious in ancient Greece and Rome, is now his Merit.

Though an Audience, whoſe Morals are not entirely vitiated, cannot but compaſſionate the innocent unfortunate, yet this Tenderneſs ſoon expires in the repeated Applauſes of a lucky Profligate. Hence it is, that at preſent the Stage ſeems to be the Fountain of Immorality, where Virtue and Innocence are undermined. When Vice is richly arrayed; when Encomiums are beſtowed

beſtowed upon its Votaries, and the Actors publickly applauded by Perſons of Diſtinction and Character, weak and incautious Youth are apt to imagine, that there is no ſuch Odium in Vice as pretended; and to be the Friend of Virtue, is to be an Enemy to Politeneſs and Gallantry. Thus far in general to ſhew the Service or Diſſervice of the Stage to the Morals of the People: But to come to Particulars.

Firſt, Concerning the Prophaneneſs of the Stage.

To hear how freely Oaths and Imprecations circulate, without any Horror in the Actor, and received with Indifference by the Audience, it might be juſtly ſuſpected, that both have but little of the Awe and Veneration due to the ſacred Name of God. When that ſacred Name is thus publickly ridiculed, and introduced as a Sanction to every looſe Expreſſion and obſcene Piece of Wit, that the Poet writes, does it not take off our Reverence towards the ſupreme Being, in making him approve what is mean and little in a Man to hear, ſee, ſpeak or countenance. Is not this laying a Foundation for Atheiſm? For a vicious Deity is no better than the Creature of the Imagination.

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Is it not an Encouragement to Infidelity when Chriſtians thus openly ſhew a Contempt of their Religion? Is not the Cauſe of Vice advanced, by removing the Fear of God in diſhonouring his Name?

Secondly, Concerning the Lewdneſs of the Stage:

Which is of ſuch Sort as no modeſt Perſon can ſit to hear and ſee without juſt Offence, and cannot long retain their Innocence by frequenting Places, where Guilt appears in ſuch gaudy and alluring Scenes, where to debauch and to be debauched, are eſteemed Acts of Gallantry. Every one is ſenſible from Experience, that the Paſſions need no Provocatives; they are too ſuſceptible of bad Impreſſions, more eſpecially in Youth, in whoſe tender Minds the Seeds of Virtue lie ſcattered and confuſed; who are apt to be fond of every thing, which yields Pleaſure, provokes Deſire, or flatters their Foibles. Hence, by ſeeing and reading bad Plays, they are inſtructed, and ſoon become verſed in the Arts of Intrigue; and what they publickly admire in the Drama, they afterwards practiſe in the Cloſet. For every Folly committed, they have from thence an Excuſe, and think that God

God will not condemn, what the Poet ſeems to approve.

Thoſe Parts, where an Amour is in hand, are generally wrote too ſoft, and performed in ſuch a Manner as to create, not allay Deſire. The Poet in this may have diſplayed his Talent in the Study of Nature, but has not ſhewn his Delicacy in laying open its Weakneſs. That ſuch Parts may not fail of procuring a kind Reception, Wit and Humour are not wanting. By this Means, and from the great Applauſe given, how many have been wrought upon to believe, that to play the Fool was Wiſdom, and the Loſs of Reputation Politeneſs? Hence it is, that we have ſo many Quixots amongſt the Men, ſo many Cleopatra's amongſt the Women. Hence it is, that the Youth of both Sexes are read in nothing but Plays and Romances, and their Converſation, like their Dreſs, appears to be made up of Fopperies and Trifles. Hence it is, by frequenting thoſe Places, and reading ſuch Books, that many have been eaſily ſeduced to give up their Virtue and Innocence, and afterwards, to ſupport a wretched Life, have turned common Proſtitutes: Their Gallants alſo are by their Extravagance compelled to follow as bad Courſes,

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till Death or the Law puts an End to the Diſtreſs and Miſery of both.

Thirdly, Concerning the Ridicule of the Clergy.

When one of that Order is introduced, the Mimic appears more than ordinary grave, to excite a loud Laugh; and apes the Prieſt, to make the Character perſonated appear an Object rather of Deriſion than Eſteem. The Poet wants not for Strokes of Satire to pleaſe the Audience; the Generality of which are fond of hearing and ſeeing thoſe Characters railed at and ridiculed, which they cannot imitate. I might enlarge upon the Prejudices done to Religion by bringing ſuch Perſons on the Stage; the Contempt of the former generally producing an Indifference towards the latter; and Morality having but little Influence, when its Preachers are thus expoſed to publick Scorn and Deriſion; not many having Diſcernment or being willing to diſtinguiſh the Difference of Times and Places, but the Generality imagining, that what the Prieſt appears upon the Stage, the ſame he is off; and thereby the whole Body is condemned for the Pride, the Inſolence and Ambition of a few; though, I ſay, I might enlarge upon

upon the Prejudices done to Religion, yet I forbear, leſt I ſhould be cenſured for Partiality in treating of Self. I ſhall only obſerve, the Truth of which all are Witneſſes to, that the Times are not ſo good, but a Reformation of Manners would be uſeful, and ſeems to be neceſſary; yet the ungenerous and uncivil Treatment ſhewn to the inferior Clergy, upon whom this Buſineſs principally depends, muſt render Attempts of that Kind at beſt precarious, generally unſucceſsful.

Fourthly, Moſt of the Plays exhibited tend to diveſt the Mind of ſerious Thoughts and make us forget ourſelves.

Religion is repreſented frequently as a Subject fit only for the Contemplation of the Weak and Superſtitious. Hence many learn to think of it with Indifference; and as the Rules of it oftentimes diſagree with their Actions, Scruples are eaſily admitted and readily adopted, which end either in a Diſregard or Contempt of its Authority. And when any thing from within troubles them, and grave ſerious Thoughts (which at ſome Intervals will ſteal upon them) make their Conſcience uneaſy, a theatrical Entertainment will remove the Burden, and

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the ſuperſtitious Fears and Fancies, as they are termed, are for the preſent diverted. Every Thing there appears gay and brilliant, and if the gloomy Thoughts of Eternity ſometimes attack them, they are ſpeedily diſſipated by an Air or a Catch.

Fifthly, The Stage begets in Youth Habits of Sloth and Idleneſs, makes them negligent in Buſineſs, and to ſupport their Extravagance, not only to be too free with their Maſter's Time, but with the Goods and his Caſh. This is done in order to appear with Advantage at a Playhouſe; where they contract a Taſte for Gaiety and Grandeur, immediately commence Gentlemen without Title or Purſe to ſupport it; where they are ſoon initiated by their new Acquaintance into the genteel and faſhionable Vices of the Town, and ſhewn the Way of ſpending their Fortunes, before they are of Age to poſſeſs them, or taking up Money before they have by Labour and Induſtry acquired it; where they learn Diſcontent in their Station of Life, think that they deſerve more Favours than they receive, and refuſe to perform any Buſineſs, unleſs upon their own Terms, which, like their Pleaſures, are unreaſonable and extravagant.

Thus

Thus I have briefly ſhewn the Tendency of bad Plays to corrupt our Manners, and to leſſen the Awe and Reverence due to Religion. The Complaints made may be remedied; but the vitiated Taſte of the Audience muſt be firſt corrected, elſe all Attempts to remove them will be unſucceſsful: For the Managers of the Theatres find it greatly for their Intereſt to exhibit what is bad, from the great Number who crowd to hear and ſee them. A Reformation would be of conſiderable Benefit to the Public; Vice would then be expoſed, and the Cauſe of Virtue ſtrengthened, which was the original Intention of Plays; and alſo to render thoſe Crimes and Follies, againſt which the Law has made no Proviſion, ridiculous and contemptible.

To conclude,

So long as our Entertainments and Diverſions are innocent; ſo long as they are not injurious to our Morals, or prejudicial to the Intereſt of Religion; ſo long as they are not expenſive and extravagant, ſuch as our Fortunes, or the Wants of our Families will not admit; ſo long as they do not make us negligent in Buſineſs, or take us off from attending Matters of

Weight and Importance, it cannot be criminal to partake of, if it may be thought a Virtue to abſtain from them. Your Virtue, your Religion, your temporal Happineſs, your Family Good are in no Danger, provided thoſe Conſequences do not happen. That they may not, it is both your Duty and Intereſt to take Care.

A METHOD to prevent THEFT and ROBBERY.

EPHESIANS, CHAP. iv. V. 28.

" Let him that ſtole, ſteal no more, but
" rather let him labour, working with his
" Hands the Thing which is good."

EVERY one, who reflects how much Fraud and Diſhoneſty prevail, and how ineffectual the Laws made to prevent thoſe Practices have proved, muſt be affected with the Damages ſuſtained by Society; and cannot be unconcerned at the Diſtreſs they bring upon the unhappy Aggreſſors. To ſee Numbers of our Fellow Creatures untimely taken off the Stage; and others, not a few, ſent for Offences the moſt trivial into foreign Parts, from whence

not one in an hundred returns, and many die before, or ſoon after their Arrival, by which Means many Hands, which might have been made uſeful, are loſt to Society; ſuch Sights as theſe cannot fail of exciting Pity and Compaſſion, in the tender Breaſt, and every true Lover of his Country; whoſe Strength, Support and Riches depend upon the Increaſe, not Diminution, of its People. Let us condemn the Action, but be merciful to the Man; not expoſing him to, nor inflicting a Puniſhment greater than his Crime has deſerved.

How many have fallen a Sacrifice to the publick Reſentment, who from their Infancy have been trained up to none other Maxim, than that of living upon the Publick? others from the Want of a ſober and religious Education, occaſioned by the Neglect, Poverty or Wickedneſs of Parents; and ſome indeed who having had thoſe Advantages, which the others wanted, from an early Attachment to, and Perſeverance in bad Courſes, forgot to act like Men and Chriſtians.

As few Perſons are born without a Genius to ſomething, ſo many of the unhappy Sufferers have been poſſeſſed of no mean Talents; and others would have appeared to

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an equal Advantage, if they had been cultivated and improved by a ſuitable Education. Would it not then be better to conſult the Inclination and Diſpoſition of Criminals? Not cut them off from Society, but put them to ſuch Employment to which they are by Temper and Genius adapted: The Want or Loſs of which has been in many the principal Cauſe of Diſhoneſty; by which Appointment, with proper Care and Diſcipline, Virtue and Honeſty would be inſtilled into them, and in Time they would yield much Good to Society.

Many Felonies deemed capital with us, in the Roman and Athenian Governments were treated with leſs Severity. The Parties injured were either to accept of a Reſtitution, if it could be made; or a Commutation, ſomething of equal Value to be given; or if the injurious could neither reſtore nor produce an equivalent, ſome ſlight Puniſhment was to be inflicted, adequate to the Crime committed. To this it may be objected, that in former Ages Men were content with what they had, and therefore more honeſt: So that Laws in thoſe Times uſeleſs, are now rendered neceſſary for the better Security of private Property, becauſe few Men reſt ſatisfied in the Station of Life

Providence has placed them, but either to gratify their Avarice or support unneceſſary Expences, are guilty of private or open Fraud and Diſhoneſty.

But this is a miſtaken Notion. The Cauſe of the Difference between the Moderns and Ancients ſeems to be this, Men were then more ſtrict in the Obſervance of their Religion; Parents were diligent and careful to inſtruct their Children in the Rites, Ceremonies, Laws and Cuſtoms both civil and religious of their Country; the Rich did not oppreſs the Poor, but relieved and aſſiſted them when in Diſtreſs and Want; and the natural or acquired Endowments of both were employed without any Regard to private Views, ſolely to advance the Publick Good and Welfare.

It was this Conduct, that ennobled Greece and Rome. When it ceaſed, then Liberty, Fame, Honeſty and every ſocial Virtue expired. Bribery, Corruption, Extortion, Oppreſſion, and Rapine ſucceeded. The Rich were ſelfiſh, proud and inſolent; the Poor turbulent and violent. Jealouſy and Diſcontent reigned in every Perſon; and the publick Good became the Sanction both of the little and the great Villain. I do not ſay that we are in the ſame Condition,

But if the publick Good was made the publick Concern; if Men amaſſed Wealth, procured Power and courted Preferment, with the laudable View of being ſerviceable and beneficial to the Community, not to aggrandize Self, to make a Figure and Appearance in Life, and enjoy the Pleaſures of it: If Superiors behaved in an affable and courteous Manner to their Inferiors, and Inferiors ſhewed a proper Reſpect to Superiors, and both practiſed and obſerved the Duties and Precepts of Religion more; our Country would not as now abound with Knaves and Thieves, nor would its Happineſs and Welfare be ſacrificed to the Pride, Avarice and Ambition of a few.

But paſs we from the Pagan to the Jewiſh Polity; the Laws of which were framed and compoſed by the ſupreme Legiſlator; in which Capital Puniſhments were not ordained for any Felony; but according to the Injury done or received, Satisfaction was to be given or made by the Aggreſſor. Other Crimes which we are ſo weak or ſo wicked to treat with Indifference, as Adultery and Sabbath Breaking, were adjudged deſerving of Death; Crimes theſe more diſpleaſing and offenſive in the Sight of God, than pilfering and ſtealing Trifles, and muſt ſo appear

pear to Man, when he ſeriouſly reflects upon the unhappy Conſequences, which they never fail of producing.

Will it be ſaid, that the Jews were ſo honeſt as not to need Capital Puniſhments? Read their Hiſtory, and they appear to have been a crafty, cheating and knaviſh People. And your own Experience will convince you, that the modern Jews have as little Honeſty as their Forefathers. Theſe are Acts extremely prejudicial to the Good of Society; which the Supreme Being would have provided againſt by Laws more rigorous and ſevere, if they had been juſt and neceſſary. And if nothing ſhort of Death could have prevented Fraud, (though that Penalty has not anſwered the Intention of the Legiſlator,) that, it is probable, would have been ordained as the proper Puniſhment: But as ſuch Puniſhment was not ordained, it may be reaſonably concluded, that the Crime of Felony is not equal to ſuch Severity; that no one can be ſo much injured in his Property as to be adequate to the Loſs or Deprivation of Being.

You obſerve then that in the beſt of Governments, Human and Divine, this Puniſhment was not inflicted; yet in thoſe States Fraud and Diſhoneſty were not un-

known, nor unpractiſed. This Lenity, if it muſt not be called Juſtice, had a good Effect; for though private Property might have been more expoſed, yet the Lives of the Poſſeſſors were ſafe and unhurt. But Death being fixed as the Penalty, not content with robbing or defrauding, for the Sake of Self-preſervation they oftentimes commit Acts of Violence, and add to Theft, Murder.

As Death is more than an Equivalent for any Loſs, ſince there is not any thing ſo dear and valuable as Life; and as it has not anſwered the Deſign of the Law in preventing Robberies, but has rather made Robbers more barbarous, cruel and deſperate, ſuppoſe that ſome other Method ſhould be tried.

The Apoſtle's Advice to thoſe who have lived by Diſhoneſty is, that they ſhould, by Labour and Induſtry, endeavour to procure a Subſiſtence: So it may be found upon Trial the moſt effectual Method to prevent or put a Stop to Robberies, at leaſt to leſſen the Frequency of them, by confining the Aggreſſors to hard Labour. And by a proper Application of Lenity or Severity as their Crimes or Behaviour require; by inſtructing them in the Principles of the Chriſtian Religion,

gion, which many of these unhappy Persons are ignorant of or little acquainted with; by convincing them of the Folly and Weakness in forsaking a real for an imaginary Good; and by adding some little Encouragement to be virtuous and good, either by lessening the Portion of Labour assigned them, or a Trifle of Money, they might in Time be made useful Members of Society.

Of what Use these frequent Executions? Is private Property more safe? Are our Lives better secured? Are not the Dangers and Fears the same? Do their Frequency lessen the Number of Criminals? When one Head is taken off, do not two, like to what Report hath said of the fabulous Hydra, spring up? Have not the Goals been found too little to contain them, and our Plantations crowded with them? And if the daily Papers speak true, the various and numberless Cheats and Frauds, too successfully practised, shew, that these Grievances will not be speedily removed, if the same Methods are pursued.

It may be said, by these Executions, dangerous and hurtful Persons are removed from Society; such who have forfeited all Right of Protection, and are entitled to receive

ceive no Favour from it. Granting this to be true; May they not in Time be of more Service, than they have been of Prejudice, if theſe ſanguinary and cruel Methods were laid aſide? When brought to a Conviction of their Folly, and made ſenſible of the Duty and Advantage of a virtuous and induſtrious Life, might not their Hands, now miſchievous, be uſeful in the Improvement of our Manufactures; or if no Genius for thoſe Arts, might they not ſtrengthen and mann our Fleets and Armies?

It may be ſaid, that to build a Place for the Reception of Criminals and the Purpoſe of Labour, would be attended with conſiderable Expence, and no ſmall Sum would be required for their daily Support and Maintenance. It is acknowledged. But in Time the Expence would be reimburſed, and they would, from the Profits ariſing from their Labour, be ſoon in a Capacity of maintaining themſelves. The Expence, however, can be no juſt and reaſonable Exception againſt the Deſign; for the Benefit Society would receive by the Execution of it, would be greatly ſuperior to it; ſince our Lives, Fortunes and Properties would be more ſecure and free from Danger.

To this it may be objected, that they have contracted ſuch an Habit of Idleneſs, (the pretended, not real Cauſe of Knavery and Diſhoneſty) that they would be averſe to Work and Labour. But this is a miſtaken Notion; for Man is an active and reſtleſs Spirit: And theſe Perſons have as great a Diſlike and Averſion to an idle Life, as we could wiſh or deſire them to have. It is for want of conſtant Employment, and being unable to continue long out of Action, that they form, contrive and execute Schemes of Fraud and Violence. Is it not the frequent Complaint of theſe unhappy Perſons, that if they could have been conſtantly employed, they might have eſcaped an untimely End? Does it not, therefore, ſeem probable, that many would, if ſuch a Scheme ſhould take Place, be preſerved from Ruin? and others, but lately initiated into theſe bad Arts, would be glad of quitting them on ſuch Conditions; which now, for fear of Detection, they cannot, cannot live honeſtly and ſoberly, becauſe their Characters being bad, no one chuſes to truſt or put any Confidence in them: A Condition which merits Pity and Compaſſion. Hard Lot indeed! when they would, but dare not be honeſt; when diſpoſed and inclined

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to turn out of the Road of Vice, they are under an abſolute Neceſſity of directly travelling on, till the Law over-takes and cuts them off. An affecting Account this; but more affecting, when we recollect, that many of thoſe who have ſuffered the Severity of the Law, by contracting an Intimacy, though ignorantly, with looſe Company, have been, when in Liquor, drawn into the Commiſſion of Crimes, which, when committed, for their own Safety and Security, they were obliged ever after to follow and practiſe.

But beſides this good Effect upon Perſons already engaged in theſe infamous Practices, many, now wavering, would be prevented from entering into them: And the Looſe, Idle and Diſorderly would become virtuous and induſtrious, when they perceived, that they ſhould be conſtrained and compelled ſo to be: If not from a Principle of Goodneſs, yet from a Dread and Fear, leſt they ſhould be forced to do more Work, than they would willingly chuſe; receive no Benefit and Advantage from it; be kept in cloſe Confinement and live hard.

Need it be aſked; Has the Manner of puniſhing Criminals any thing terrible? Is it more than a momentary Pain? Scarce

ſenſible

ſenſible to the unhappy Sufferer. Is not the Shame ſoon over? Hence Men are not diſheartened nor afraid to commit ſuch Actions, as muſt, when diſcovered, expoſe them to the ignominious Fate, ſince they know the Miſery to be felt here is of ſhort Duration: Whereas, if the Puniſhment was lingering, not depriving them of Life, but rendering it diſagreeable and unpleaſant, it would be greater and more ſevere, becauſe of longer Duration; and would, in all Probability, prevent many Offences. Beſides, by this Proviſion, they might have ſome Knowledge of Religion, and entertain ſome ſerious Thoughts of a future State; which, it is to be feared, many of theſe unfortunate Perſons have never attended to or believed, till the Time of their Exit. They have put an End to a miſerable Life; imagine that they cannot be more miſerable than they have been, and are therefore regardleſs of the Felicity, and have no Dread or juſt Apprehenſion of the Puniſhment of another State.

It is from the Want of a due Senſe and Reverence for Religion, that Hypocriſy, Diſſimulation and Fraud are ſo much in Vogue; Honeſty, Sincerity, and plain Dealing, out of Faſhion: That every one ſtudies his own

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private Eaſe and Tranquillity, gives little Attention to the publick Welfare and Proſperity, looks only to the enriching himſelf and Family, and is unconcerned at the Diſtreſs and Poverty of the Nation, if ſo be his own Coffers are well filled. When Men think well of Religion, and act conſiſtent with its Precepts, there will be no Want of capital Laws to make them honeſt; which, if thought to be neceſſary, are, without ſuch Obedience and Reſpect, rendered of none Effect. When Conſcience is ſtifled, or has loſt its Influence, and a future State is ridiculed, contemned or diſregarded, human Laws are, as from the publick Executions they appear to be, uſeleſs.

The Thought of a future Exiſtence oftentimes prevents the Commiſſion of a bad Action: It keeps many honeſt, who are by Will and Inclination otherwiſe diſpoſed; which, when effaced, cancelled, overlooked or neglected, makes men cruel, wicked and unjuſt. And ſuch thoſe Men will always be, who act without Conſcience and live without Religion.

To conclude,

As Religion ſhews us the Way to be happy in this as well as in the next World, ſince

ſince it teaches Contentment in our Situation of Life, not fooliſhly to ſquander away what we have, nor injuriouſly to procure what we have not; as it ſhews us, and Experience may convince us of the Truth, that our Wants and Neceſſities, if great and preſſing, are tranſient and momentary; and that we ought, on that Account, nobly to reſolve to be ſuperior to, or ſink under the Weight of them, rather than meanly and baſely ſeek Relief by Means unjuſt, illegal and diſhoneſt; as Religion teaches us, whatſoever is great and good, whatſoever may add Grace and Ornament to our Nature, and diſplays the Folly and Weakneſs as well as the Diſtreſs and Miſery, that attend the Practice of Vice; as it teaches us to be honeſt, ſober, temperate, not malicious, envious and injurious, we cannot, unleſs we are Enemies to our own Happineſs, but obſerve her Laws. We cannot begin the Practice too early, nor recommend it to Youth too ſoon. For ſo long as we are, and continue religious, ſo long we may be truly and juſtly ſaid to be happy. We cannot, indeed, be exempt from the common Accidents of Life, which happen alike to the Good and the Bad; yet we ſhall never feel nor ſuffer

thoſe

thoſe Troubles and Calamities which Vice conſtantly beſtows upon thoſe, who are ſo weak or ſo wicked as to practiſe it.

Steadily adhere to the Precepts of your Religion; ſeek not, nor covet Superfluities; be ſatisfied with what is neceſſary and convenient; remember that the End of Exiſtence here is the Beginning of Happineſs or Miſery hereafter, and Happineſs or Miſery eternal. Teach and inſtruct your Family in the ſame wholeſome and uſeful Principles; recommend and encourage the Practice by your own Example; then neither you nor they will ever experience the Misfortunes and Uneaſineſs of the Wicked, nor leave this World with Shame or Ignominy, nor be expoſed to endleſs Miſery, but enjoy everlaſting Happineſs hereafter.

The Thirtieth of JANUARY.

St. PETER, 1 Ep. CHAP. ii. V. 17.

" Love the Brotherhood. Fear God. Ho-
" nour the King."

THE Occaſion of this Day's Solemnity, few are unacquainted with. The melancholy Events, which then occurred, we have to this Time experienced. An Enquiry into the Cauſes that produced them, is a Subject more proper for an Hiſtorian, than the Preacher. Beſides, it is more generous and humane to throw a Veil over the Tranſactions of that Age, wherein ſuch Scenes of Diſorder and Confuſion were exhibited, a Scandal to the Profeſſion of Chriſtians, a Diſgrace to the Name of

Engliſhmen. It would alſo be ſtirring up the Aſhes of the Dead, and bringing to the Minds of the preſent Age, the ſad Remembrance of the Folly and Wickedneſs of their Anceſtors, whoſe Conduct they have in Abhorrence, and whoſe infamous Examples they intend not to imitate.

Another Reaſon for omitting an Account of the Proceedings of that remarkable Period, is to avoid Reflections upon a Set of Men, who though firſt in Oppoſition, from a tender and ſincere Regard of the People's Freedom, and an honeſt Jealouſy of the Royal Power, never thought of nor intended to ſubvert the one, or deſtroy the other; that being the concerted Scheme but of a few, who took an Advantage of the publick Diſtreſs, and made the Cry of Liberty and Religion a Cloak for their Iniquity and Rebellion.

Waving, therefore, ſuch an Enquiry, I ſhall endeavour to explain, and recommend the Practice of the Duties contained in the Text; which, I hope, will not be unſuitable to the Day, ſince religious Diſcord, Prophaneneſs and Immorality, a Contempt and Diſregard for Royalty, were not a little inſtrumental in bringing upon this Nation the Calamities now commemorated.

Firſt,

First, Let us love the Brotherhood.

By Brotherhood, is to be understood all Christians whatsoever, they being, in the Language of Scripture, stiled Brethren. By loving them, is meant the doing them all Offices of Kindness and Civility in our Power. Happy for Christianity were its Professors thus to act! Happy Nation, when the People are brought to lay aside the contrary Behaviour, so ill agreeing with their Character as Men, Fellow-Subjects, Christians, and Heirs of the same Promises of God.

The Dissention and Disunion subsisting amongst Protestants, are much to be lamented; since they are an Encouragement to Infidelity, and give no little Advantage to the Adversaries of the Protestant Cause. But then what Occasion for insulting and opprobrious Language? Why should a Difference in Opinion produce Hatred and Animosity amongst ourselves? Is it not possible for a Man, who dissents from the Church, to be a good Christian and a good Subject? As human Appointments cannot lay Claim to Infallibility, since Customs adopted by ancient Times have, in succeeding Ages, been altered or reversed, and as every one

has an undoubted Right of determining his own Conſcience, where Abilities are not wanting, why ſhould we deny that Freedom to others, which we ourſelves make Uſe of? Why upbraid and cenſure them, for what we in ourſelves allow to be right and juſt?

Permit we then theſe different Opinions to be entertained, ſo long as they are not injurious to the Cauſe of Virtue and Religion, nor prejudicial to Man's Salvation; ſo long as Men live peaceably with each other, and do not make a Handle of theſe Diviſions to create Diſturbances in the State; ſo long as they confine not their Favours to thoſe of their own Following, but only beſtow where Merit demands, and give where Want requires. We wiſh, that in theſe Duties we were not found highly criminal. We wiſh, that Perſons of Credit and Reputation always had their Reward; that Charity and Beneficence were not confined to a Sect. What other Recommendations to Places of Profit and Truſt have many had, than being Zealots of a Party? What Diſqualifications others, than being of a particular Following? How ungenerous, unreaſonable and unjuſt ſuch Behaviour? The Enquiry ſhould not be, who, but what

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he is; not whether he frequents the Church or Meeting, but whether he is the Friend of Virtue and an Enemy to Vice; not whether he admits or rejects all that the Church requires and commands, but whether or no he believes the Doctrines and lives up to the Rules of Chriſtianity; ſuch Doctrines and Rules as appear to him to be clearly and plainly revealed and made known in the ſacred Scriptures. Theſe are the Perſons moſt highly and juſtly deſerving of Eſteem; yet how ſeldom do they meet with it? The Man who thus lives and acts, entirely detached from Party, at leaſt the Violence of it, and treats thoſe of different Perſuaſions with Temper and Candour, is by the more charitable Chriſtian cenſured as weak, by the Bigot as wicked.

If we are to form our Judgment of Proteſtants from their Behaviour to each other, we could hardly perſuade ourſelves, that they profeſſed the ſame Religion. From the partial and reſerved Temper, it might be doubted alſo, whether they belonged to the ſame Country: A Behaviour which Chriſtianity does not countenance, and the Laws of Society condemn. Chriſtianity commands us to exerciſe Humanity and Charity to all, to Strangers, even to Ene-

mies. Shall we then behave with leſs Humanity and Charity towards thoſe, who are of the ſame Religion, the ſame Country, have the ſame Lord and Saviour, the ſame Hopes, and are entitled to the ſame Happineſs? Shall we have Dealings with thoſe, who are not only ignorant, but the declared Enemies of Chriſtianity? And ſhall Chriſtians confine their Dealings at home within their own particular Sect? Shall Turks with Turks live in a friendly and hoſpitable Manner? Shall the rude and wild Barbarians live in mutual Love and Harmony amongſt themſelves? And Chriſtians alone be at Variance and Enmity with each other? Hate, deſpiſe, plunder, perſecute and deſtroy each other? Let it not be told to the Heathen: Let it never more be known and practiſed amongſt us.

Howſoever we may diſagree in other Matters, let us in this be agreed, to perform Offices of mutual Love and Friendſhip. If we have a real Regard for the Cauſe of Chriſtianity; if we have a Value for our own private Intereſt, and the publick Peace and Tranquillity, without which we cannot enjoy what we have with Safety and Security, with Eaſe and Satisfaction; let us diſcountenance and put an End to

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all Jealouſies and Animoſities ſubſiſting. And though we may think differently of Matters, of which no certain Knowledge, after the moſt deep and laborious Enquiries, can be had, and of the Obligation to obſerve certain Rites and Ceremonies, which, though good, excellent and worthy of Obſervation, are but human Appointments and Inſtitutions, *ſtill let us love as Brethren*, remembering that that is the Mark and Characteriſtick of a true Chriſtian: *For by this*, ſaith Chriſt, *ſhall all Men know, that ye are my Diſciples, if ye have Love one towards another.*

Then we may expect to ſee, when Chriſtians are united, if not in Sentiment, yet in Love and Friendſhip, and the little and baſe Arts of aſperſing, vilifying and cenſuring each other's Perſons and Characters are laid aſide, then we may expect to ſee, but not till then, the End of Immorality and Infidelity; which theſe Hatreds and Reſentments, kept up amongſt Chriſtians, cheriſh and encourage, in which Men of bad Principles and wicked Practices find an Account.

In Matters ſpeculative, our Ignorance is great, our Knowledge, if any, but little, and that confuſed and imperfect. How unjuſt

unjuſt and unreaſonable then to cenſure, much more to behave injuriouſly to others, whoſe Opinions may be different, ſince we cannot demonſtrate ourſelves to be in the right. The Doctrines of Predeſtination and Election have employed the Pens of able and great Men: But, notwithſtanding all that has been ſaid, do they not remain as obſcure, unintelligible, and diſputable as at the firſt? They are not proper Subjects for human Diſquiſitions; and it is rather a Proof of our Weakneſs, than Judgment, to waſte Time in curiouſly prying into and exploring Secrets, which are known only to the Almighty.

Well would it have been for Chriſtianity in the early Ages of it, not leſs beneficial in theſe Times, if Men had been content with amuſing and pleaſing themſelves with their own Ignorance, and not have made thoſe Points as neceſſary Articles of Faith, which they cannot underſtand, nor clearly explain to others; and not to have beſtowed Cenſures, inflicted Penalties, thundered out Excommunications and raiſed Perſecutions againſt the oppoſite Party. This has been too much the Practice of the Chriſtian Church in the ſeveral Ages of it before and after its Commencement of a national Religion, down

down to the preſent Period: A Practice which Chriſtianity condemns, as it not only keeps up Diviſions amongſt Chriſtians, but encourages Enmities, Diſputes and Controverſies, as ancient Times have ſeverely experienced, to which the preſent are not, we wiſh they were, entire Stangers.

Secondly,

Fear God.

Another Precept contained in the Text, and which, when duly attended to, and religiouſly obſerved, will be in a great Meaſure inſtrumental in preventing us from ſuffering the ſame Calamities and Afflictions, with which our Anceſtors were once affected, is the Fear of God, that is, the Practice of Religion. When once Men are ſuperior to and uninfluenced by it; when Conſcience is lulled to ſleep, and Men neither attend to, nor obey its Dictates; then it is, that there is no Wickedneſs, no Villainy, however great and offenſive, but they will eaſily come into and execute. Hence Fraud and Diſhoneſty, Extravagance and Intemperance, Bribery and Corruption, ſo much and ſo juſtly complained of in theſe Days. When Men have got above the Reverence due to Religion, then it is, that we

ſee

ſee Virtue in the greateſt Diſtreſs, and Vice triumphant.

We wiſh that this Fear of God, this Reverence for Religion was more viſible. It is indeed impoſſible, ſo long as Men are Men, ſo long as the World exiſts, but there ſhould be Wickedneſs in it; of which there has been more or leſs in all Ages of the World. We wiſh that it did not too much prevail in this, and that Virtue was not ſo rarely ſeen, as like a Light ſhining in a dark Place to ſurprize us.

Need I mention as a Motive to have this Fear of God, this aweful Regard for the divine Laws, the good Effects which will flow from it? Need I mention the bad Effects of a Neglect or Contempt of it? Do you want to be told what real and ſolid Pleaſure and Satisfaction attend the Practice of the Duties of Religion; what Diſtreſs and Miſery the contrary Behaviour? If good, you muſt in yourſelves have experienced the Truth of the former, and you need not go far to ſeek Examples to convince you of the Truth of the latter; they are too numerous; every Lane and Corner of your City preſents you with ſome of theſe deplorable Objects. Yet deplorable as they really are, how are the bad Examples imitated; how many

many are haſtening on to the ſame diſmal Situation? They may flatter themſelves that ſuch will not be their Caſe: I grant that it may not. Poverty, Shame and Ignominy are not indeed the Portion of all wicked Men; ſome few eſcape: But a weak and ſickly Body, a diſturbed and diſordered Soul, no one who has lived wickedly ever was, or ever will be free from. This is the Condition only of good and pious Men; who, though they are not exempt from the common Accidents and Misfortunes of Life, which happen agreeable to the Order eſtabliſhed by divine Providence, have none of the Uneaſineſs and Affliction, which trouble and befall the Wicked. They are indeed viſited with Sickneſs, but Intemperance is not the Cauſe; they are in Trouble, but not through any Fault of their own; they are brought low by Poverty, but Folly is not the Cauſe; they are in Sorrow, but not by a guilty Conſcience,—Sickneſs, Trouble, Sorrow and Poverty, all the Sons of Adam are expoſed to, and are more or leſs afflicted with; but theſe Calamities fall heavier upon the Wicked, becauſe they are generally in them the Effects of Folly and Extravagance, and Reflection adminiſters

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no Comfort and Conſolation, but encreaſes their Pain and Miſery.

Let me aſk, to yourſelves, to your Conſcience I make the Appeal, did you ever find yourſelf uneaſy after the Performance of Duty? Did you ever repent of any Good done? Hath not Reflection afforded Pleaſure and Satisfaction? Did you meet with this Pleaſure and Satisfaction from the Neglect of Duty? Did you ever find yourſelf the better for the Practice of Vice? Have you never felt any Uneaſineſs after it? Has your Mind been as compoſed and undiſturbed after, as before the Commiſſion of Sin? Has not ſomething within convinced you, that you had done wrong? Have you not wiſhed, that what hath been, never had been done? If ſuch then is the Difference between the Righteous and the Wicked, between thoſe who practiſe the Duties of Religion, and thoſe who do not, ſuch the Happineſs of the one, ſuch the Miſery of the other in this Life; I mention not the Joy and Sorrow which awaits them in the next World; if it is impoſſible not to feel theſe diſagreeable Senſations if wicked, let us always fear God and keep his Commandments, for it is that alone, which can give

Peace

Peace of Mind here, and prevent our being miſerable hereafter.

I know it may be ſaid, that wicked Men are oftentimes proſperous, free from any uncommon Misfortunes, and that even their Wickedneſs is the Cauſe of their Proſperity. This has been Matter of Complaint in all Ages. The Heathens were unable to account for this ſtrange Proceeding of Providence; which occaſioned ſome to deny, and others to doubt, not only of a Providence, but of the Being of God Himſelf. When they ſaw Virtue in Diſtreſs, and Vice decked in its Spoils; when they ſaw thoſe who had injured, oppreſſed, plundered and enſlaved their Country, great in Wealth and Power; whilſt the Brave, the Generous and the Good, the Friends of Liberty and the Gods were diſtreſſed, perſecuted and ſlain; if there are Gods, they cried, why do the Innocent fall unpitied, and the Guilty live unrevenged?

But what was Surpriſe and Aſtoniſhment to the Heathen, cannot be ſo to the Chriſtian. For obſerve the Tenderneſs of God to Sinners, yet to the virtuous juſt. We have in the Goſpel, the Reaſon why he does not always interpoſe in an extraordinary Manner in puniſhing Sinners, and rewarding the Good,

Good; becauſe Mankind is to be puniſhed or rewarded in another Life, and that Sinners might have an Opportunity of repenting and ſaving themſelves from eternal Ruin and Deſtruction.

Hence let not the Wicked triumph in the Spoils of Virtue and Religion, nor grow rich and great by Oppreſſion, Injuſtice, or at the publick Expence; ſince though here they may come in no Misfortune like other Folk, yet their Crimes will not fail of the Vengeance they have deſerved hereafter. Neither let the Good be dejected, nor diſcouraged, nor prompted to charge God fooliſhly, as if he had deſerted the Cauſe of Virtue; ſince this Proceeding is agreeable to the Goſpel Diſpenſation, and all their Sufferings here will be more than recompenſed hereafter. Let the Wicked poſſeſs their Wealth, their Power, their Honours, without your Envy; if they yield them Pleaſure, let them enjoy it, for it is purchaſed at an ineſtimable Price, Infamy in this, Miſery in the next World.

They are not, however, without Trouble and Uneaſineſs. Thoughtleſs and unconcerned as they ſeem to be abroad, engaged in Company and revelling in Pleaſures, when at Home, retired from the World and alone

alone, then ſad Reflection comes, it cannot be ſtifled; in thoſe ſober and ſerious Hours they muſt feel Remorſe of Conſcience, and what they then feel, may no one ever experience. Pleaſures indeed quickly ſucceed, and divert the melancholy Thoughts; but the Time will come, when Pleaſures can be no longer enjoyed, and Reflection no longer ſtifled nor diverted; then, when afflicted with Sickneſs or Diſeaſe, and moſtly wanting Comfort, no Comfort can they find; wanting Mercy and deſpairing of obtaining it, they look back upon their paſt Lives with Horror, and look forward without Hope; confounded and amazed with Guilt, they dare not intreat Heaven for Pardon undeſerved, yet they know not how to die without it. They have lived wickedly, but dread the Thoughts of dying ſo; they are apprehenſive of the Puniſhment, which their Sins have merited, and not knowing how to divert it, as they have ſpent their Lives miſerably, ſo they end their Days deſperately.

Proceed we now to explain briefly the other Precept contained in the Text, namely,

Honour the King.

We are herein required to ſhew all due Reſpect and Deference to his Perſon, and exalted Character; to pay all lawful and juſt Obedience to his Commands; to aſſiſt him in the Execution of his Laws; to oppoſe all Invaders of his Right; to aid him in repelling the Attacks, and defeating the Deſigns of his and our Enemies, either foreign or domeſtick, at home or abroad, with our Counſel, our Fortunes, our Lives; to ſuffer no Infringement of his Power and Authority, ſo long as it is not exerciſed againſt, but in Support of the Conſtitution; to act neither the Part of Slaves nor Rebels, never forgetting our Allegiance, nor meanly proſtituting or tamely giving up our native Freedom: Ever remembering that Allegiance is only due, when the Laws of the Nation are not perverted, the Religion not changed, nor its Liberties invaded. Attacks upon the Peoples Liberties, were the principal Cauſes of the publick Calamities and Misfortunes this Day remembered. The ſad Remembrance of which, we pray God, may ever prevent any Differences between King and People, cauſe Peace and Union

to

to reign amongſt us, and the Deſigns of wicked and ambitious Men to be ever baffled and diſappointed.

To conclude.

Let us diligently attend to and practiſe the Advice of the Apoſtle, that is, to love the Brotherhood, to fear God, and to honour the King; then we ſhall be good Men, good Chriſtians, and good Subjects; we ſhall live comfortably here, and be happy hereafter.

A

SERMON

PREACHED AT

CHRIST CHURCH

In NEWGATE-STREET,

On TUESDAY the 21ſt of SEPTEMBER, 1756.

BEFORE

The Right Honourable the LORD MAYOR,

The ALDERMEN,

And GOVERNORS of the ſeveral HOSPITALS of this City.

2 SAMUEL xvii. 23.

" And when Ahithophel ſaw that his
" Counſel was not followed, he ſaddled
" his Aſs and aroſe, and gat him home
" to his Houſe, to his City, and put his
" Houſhold in order; and hanged him-
" ſelf."

THERE is no Hiſtory, the Roman excepted, which abounds with ſuch a Variety of Incidents, uſeful and entertaining, as the Jewiſh: There is not any, that reads better Leſſons of ſound Wiſdom and good Policy to Policy to Poſterity. Though the Jews were not, of all Nations, the moſt remarkable for the ableſt Politicians, yet in their Miſconduct future Times may provide againſt

the ſame Misfortunes, which have happened to them.

The good or bad Succeſs of the Jewiſh Affairs was principally owing to the State of Religion amongſt them. The more virtuous the People, the more proſperous the State; the more vicious, the more adverſe. This is confirmed in the Character of their Commanders, who, before the Eſtabliſhment of the Regal Authority, were Men of little Note and Eminence, of leſs Skill and Ability. This Choice of Inſtruments, deficient both in Courage and Judgment, ſeems to have been purpoſely made, that the Deity might more viſibly appear to be, what he had declared himſelf to be, their chief Commander.

After the ceaſing of the Divine, and the Eſtabliſhment of the Regal Government, we read of ſome eminent for Prudence and Valour, experienced both in the Field and Cabinet. Under the Conduct and Management of ſuch, the Jewiſh State proſpered, ſo long as they were diſintereſted, and Religion was obſerved by them and the People. But when Religion declined amongſt the lower Claſs, and Oppreſſion began to be exerciſed by the higher, and both were by Vice and Luxury weakened and enervated,

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it became an eaſy Prey to their Enemies: And without murmuring and repining, they ſuffered their Liberty and Property to be invaded and deſtroyed by every daring and deſigning Knave both in Church and State.

If you conſult the prophetick Writings, what has been advanced concerning the Jewiſh Governors, civil and eccleſiaſtical, will appear to be true. Their Princes, or great Men, were Companions of Thieves; they dealt treacherouſly; the Prophets taught and propheſied for Hire; the Judges were corrupt, Lovers of Gifts, and fond of Bribes, to pervert the Cauſe of Juſtice, to injure the Oppreſſed, and protect the Injurious from Puniſhment.

It is worthy of Obſervation, that the Jewiſh Kings were not the moſt fortunate in the Choice of their Miniſters, who were generally ſelfiſh and rapacious, and through Exactions and Oppreſſions rendered them odious to the Publick. No King ſeems to have been more unfortunate in a Miniſter, than David: No one more impoſed upon and deceived by one, whom he had advanced and promoted; by one, who was by the Ties of Gratitude, the conſiderable Favours conferred upon him, and the peculiar Friendſhip ſhewn to him, bound to render

render him the moſt faithful Service. Yet this Man, thus raiſed to the higheſt Station in the Kingdom, eſteemed and careſſed by the King, as his greateſt and principal Friend, raiſed, encouraged, aided and aſſiſted in a Rebellion againſt him: Whoſe Fate was as ſingular as his Ingratitude; for according to the Text, "he hanged himſelf."

From what has been briefly ſaid concerning the Jewiſh State, we are naturally led in this Time of Danger to conſider our own. But you muſt not expect to be entertained with an Enquiry into the publick Tranſactions; that belongs to other Places and Perſons, who are more converſant and experienced in them; therefore the moſt proper, becauſe the moſt able, to perform ſuch a Work. I ſhall only conſider the Uſefulneſs of the Practice of Religion to procure the divine Favour, and defeat our Enemies.

And firſt, God will eſpouſe the Cauſe of thoſe, who love him.

This appears to be as agreeable to Reaſon, as it is conſiſtent with Religion. God has promiſed to have a Regard to thoſe, who are obedient to his Commands. And what he has promiſed, he will undoubtedly fulfil,

fulfil, if we do not by Diſobedience render ourſelves unworthy, and incapable of receiving it. What Religion offers to thoſe, who revere it, Reaſon muſt allow to be juſt: For if there is a God, he muſt delight in every Thing, that is great and good: And as he delights in it himſelf, ſo muſt he be pleaſed with thoſe who are, and not only be pleaſed with, but reward them.

It does not ſeem to be inconſiſtent with his Providence in the Government of the World, nor with human Liberty, to diſtinguiſh thoſe, who act agreeable, from thoſe who act contrary to his Will. This Diſtinction ſeems to be as neceſſary, as it is juſt. For though Virtue might for its own Sake be admired by a few, yet the Generality of Men would with Difficulty be prevailed upon to follow it, if they were not on that Account more proſperous and ſucceſsful.

This was the Opinion of the ancient Heathen, who were zealous in obſerving the Rites and Ceremonies of their Religion, and paying a ſtrict and due Regard to whatſoever they thought might pleaſe their Deities; and whoſe Undertakings, on Account of their religious Zeal, were generally rendered ſucceſsful; not by the Deities they worſhipped,

ſhipped, who had no real Exiſtence, but by that God, who, it is probable, beheld their Piety with Pleaſure, though offered to falſe Deities; owing principally to Error and Ignorance, and the Want of that Light, which he afterwards communicated to them in the Goſpel, and by which alone they could diſcover the true and real Object of divine Worſhip.

In thoſe Ages Men could only hope for and expect the Aid and Aſſiſtance of the Powers adored; they had no Aſſurance of it: But we are now aſſured by divine Truth, that thoſe who love Him, he will love; and give to them the Life which now is, as well as that which is to come. He will not only be their Benefactor, in conſtantly ſupplying their Wants, but their Protector in defending them from Injuries, or, when injured, their Avenger, in puniſhing the Injurious.

It is at all Times neceſſary to procure the divine Favour, but eſpecially in Times of Danger and Diſtreſs. In no Time more than the preſent, when we have an Enemy too powerful, to be contemptible; too formidable, not to require the utmoſt Exertion of our native Courage and Reſolution; too much ſtrengthened in himſelf and Alliances,

liances, not to court the Aſſiſtance of Heaven: Eſpecially when it is conſidered, what little Aid we receive from foreign Powers in Alliance with us, and how dear the Purchaſe of that little! when our principal Dependance under Providence, for Safety and Security, is upon Natives, and Natives, a few excepted, unarmed and undiſciplined.

To whom then can we better apply for Relief in this Day of Calamity, than to him, who, when all human Means fail, is able to afford Aſſiſtance? He muſt, he will, he cannot but aſſiſt thoſe, whoſe Obedience to his Laws claim and demand it. He has engaged his Word for the Performance of it, and he will, by Ways unknown and improbable, fulfil it.

" By Strength" he hath ſaid, " ſhall no " Man prevail." Let then the Armies of our Enemy be great, numerous and powerful, if God is on our Side, what have we to dread, or fear? " One will," as ſaith the Scripture, " be able to chaſe a thouſand." To prove this, I could cite Examples from the Jewiſh Hiſtory, but our own contains a Variety of ſimilar Occurrences. It is needleſs to mention the Times of an Edward, an Henry, and an Anne. Few are unacquainted

quainted with the ſurpriſing and unexpected Victories then obtained by Sea and Land: Victories not leſs owing to the Piety and Goodneſs of the People, than the Valour and Prudence of the Forces.

Though the preſent Age is far from being the moſt virtuous and moſt religious, ſo neither is it what the Weak and Ignorant have repreſented it to be, the moſt wicked and moſt irreligious. Compared with the Times we are ſpeaking of, there is indeed leſs of Virtue, and more of Vice. Crimes then little known, and when committed, uſed to fill the Mind with Horror, ſuch as the heinous and deteſtable Sins of Perjury, Sodomy, and Murder, are now too much countenanced and practiſed.

A Reformation of Manners is indeed wanted, and will undoubtedly be of ſingular Benefit, not leſs to Individuals, than to the Publick. We have had the Pleaſure to ſee upon a late melancholy Occaſion, that the People are not averſe and indiſpoſed to it. In that Day of Humiliation the Places of Devotion were crowded, not out of Oſtentation or to avoid Cenſure; the Behaviour ſhewed the Devotion to have been real and undiſſembled. It is hoped, that we have, ſince that Time, made ſome Progreſs

greſs in Piety and Goodneſs, and are ready to ſhew, that a Reformation is not ſo difficult as hath been imagined.

As the People have diſcovered an Inclination towards it, it may become their Superiors to cheriſh and encourage it. For if Religion was not (what it is) of divine Authority, but a political Contrivance to keep the Weak and Ignorant in Awe and Subjection, even then it will be found both uſeful and neceſſary to enforce and procure an Obedience to its Laws, becauſe it will undoubtedly promote the Welfare and Happineſs of the State.

It has been a prevailing Cuſtom with moſt Nations in Time of War, eſpecially if they had been unſucceſsful, to appoint Days of religious Obſervance to implore the Aſſiſtance of Heaven: A Cuſtom that has been obſerved by us. It may not be now unneceſſary: But it ſeems to be improper and impertinent to pray for Succeſs, when we are not permitted the Uſe of Arms, and have no other Weapons to defend ourſelves, or annoy the Enemy, than what Nature has given us. Can we reaſonably expect, that our Prayers will be heard, when we do not make Uſe of the Means, which Providence and the Nature of our Conſtitution have

put

put into our Power? Whom can we better truſt, than our own People? In whoſe Hands can we, with more Safety and leſs Danger, repoſe our Lives, our Fortunes, our Liberties and Religion, than in thoſe, whoſe Happineſs and Preſervation will entirely depend upon the Aſſiſtance and Protection they ſhall afford us?

A Militia can be of no Prejudice to a free State. It is the only Security of the People's Rights and Liberties againſt the Weakneſs and Inability, the Treachery and Cowardice, the Arts and Deſigns of wicked great Men: And neither is it injurious to the Regal Power, or Intereſt. It was the Security and Safeguard of Prince and People in the Reign of Elizabeth. It was indeed of Prejudice in Charles's; but the unhappy Influence of bad Miniſters was the Cauſe, in whom the King placed too much Confidence. This was his Weakneſs; and in the End proved his Ruin.

Perſons entruſted with the Affairs of a free Government, if they abuſe that Truſt, may dread the Conſequence of ſuch an Eſtabliſhment: But to thoſe, whoſe Conduct is fair, open and juſt, it is of conſiderable Uſe and Advantage; as it enables them to plan and execute their Schemes with more

Spirit

Spirit and Vigour, and to moleſt and diſtreſs the Enemy abroad, when they have nothing to fear from him at home.

But ſecondly, Vice unfits Men for the publick Service.

It weakens and impairs the Conſtitution, and renders it incapable of enduring Labour and Fatigue. Luxury and Voluptuouſneſs are ſo far from inſpiring the Mind with a Love or Deſire to perform any Thing truly great, that Fear and Cowardice are the natural Offſprings. True Courage is founded on Virtue; where that is not, it proceeds not from Inclination, or Choice, but abſolute Neceſſity.

The Man who is given to Pleaſure, thinks more of preſerving himſelf, than annoying the Enemy; prefers a ſhameful Retreat to an honourable Death.

The Man who is given to Avarice, will not court but avoid Danger; engages where his Intereſt, not his Honour, is concerned; and is not leſs the Friend of the Enemy, than of the Publick.

The Man who is intemperate will hazard more than he can gain; is rather deſperate than valiant, rather mad than prudent.

But he, who has a Regard for Virtue and Religion, is the only Man fit to be truſted, ſince he alone has a true Contempt of Death. There is no Hardſhip, but he will patiently endure it; no Undertaking hazardous and dangerous, but with a calm and reſolute Spirit he will engage in, when it is for the Intereſt and Service of his Country. If ſucceſsful, he is not ſo pleaſed with the Reward conferred upon him, as the Satisfaction he feels within, from having diſcharged his Duty, and ſerved the Publick. If unſucceſsful, he has nothing to fear hereafter. His Death is indeed a Loſs to his Country; for that he could not live too long; but to himſelf a conſiderable Gain, for he muſt be happy, cannot be miſerable.

What States, what Kingdoms, what Empires have been overturned; what Armies deſtroyed by Diſſoluteneſs and Intemperance! —What made Perſia ſo eaſy a Conqueſt to Alexander, but the effeminate Manners of the Perſians?—What made the Romans obtain ſo many Victories, and be ſo ſucceſsful in War, but their Virtue and Temperance joined to their Valour and Conduct? —To what was the Defeat of Hannibal owing, but Licentiouſneſs?—And what but the

the ſame Enemy, at the laſt conquered his Conquerors?—How came the City of Babylon to have been ſo eaſily taken by Cyrus, but becauſe the King of it, his Princes and Captains were revelling and banquetting with Women, when they ſhould have been clad with Armour?—What enabled the ancient Britons ſo bravely to have withſtood the Conquerors of the World, inured to the Toil of the Field, but the Purity and Simplicity of their Manners, and a Conſtitution ſtrong and robuſt, not weakened and enervated by Vice?—What made an Henry ſo rapid in his Conqueſt of France, but becauſe he fought againſt Women, not Men?—What occaſioned the Defeat of the Spaniſh Armado, but the Goodneſs and Skill of our Naval Power?—And to what can you generally impute any Victory, or Defeat, but to the Diſcipline, or Licentiouſneſs of Commanders, or Men, or both?

Crœſus, to prevent the future Revolts of the Lydians, adviſed Cyrus not to permit them to have any Arms, and to order, that Parents ſhould bring up their Children in Luxury and Effeminacy, to ſing, to play upon Inſtruments of Muſick, to feaſt, to revel, &c. By which Means their native Courage and Reſolution would fail them,

and if they did revolt, he could have nothing to fear from Men transformed into Women. The Advice was followed, and it had the desired Effect.

And in whatsoever State this Method of Education has prevailed, or those Practices have been countenanced, it is well known, that Slavery or Ruin followed; that the People were exposed either to the Oppression and Insolence of foreign, or the more cruel and intolerable Depredations of domestic Enemies.

That the Practices mentioned prevail amongst us, you will not call upon me to prove. We wish for the Interest of Religion and the Good of our Country, that they were less frequent and obvious. It is, however, hoped, that they do not so much prevail, as to reduce us to the disagreeable Alternative, either of being Tributaries to a foreign Power abroad, or, what is worse, of being Slaves at home.

A Return to the ancient British Manners, which made this Nation respected, or feared by the neighbouring States, and laying aside foreign Accomplishments with foreign Vices, so much admired and imitated, will render our Situation, not, as at present, dangerous. What has been advanced may

not

not be credited by ſome, who cannot reconcile the Danger with their Love of their Country, and who are apt to imagine, according to their Wiſhes, that though her Colonies may ſuffer abroad, ſhe is ſafe and ſecure from any Injury at home. May ſhe ever be ſo! But let us not be too credulous nor too confident.

Where are now the Aſſyrian, the Perſian, the Grecian, the Roman Monarchies? What of their Wealth, Power and Grandeur remains? Did they fear or ſuſpect, what we, when we read, are aſtoniſhed and amazed at, their Diſſolution? Are we Strangers to the Cauſe of thoſe ever memorable and intereſting Events? If a Neglect of publick Virtue expoſed them to Ruin, can it be thought, that the general Practice of Vice will ſecure any State from the ſame unhappy Cataſtrophe?

The Carthaginians and Romans were once equal; neither gained a complete Victory over the other; both ſeemed to be, and might have remained invincible, had not the former yielded themſelves up to Debauchery, and then they were eaſily conquered.

The ſame Effect will follow, where the Cauſe is the ſame. We have, I believe, ex-

perienced its Truth. It is hoped, that we never ſhall again. Great Commanders never ſought to enrich themſelves, but aggrandize their Country, and make it to be honoured and eſteemed. Softneſs and Delicacy may ſuit well in Kings Courts, but are not adapted to the Fleet, nor the Army. To ſuch the Timbrel and the Dance are more agreeable Sounds, than the roaring of Cannon and the Claſh of Arms. The Man who cannot conquer himſelf, ſubdue his own Luſts, and is above Religion, ſeems to be a Perſon very improper and unfit to be engaged in, or truſted with any publick Employment. The Happineſs of ſuch is entirely founded on the Enjoyment of the Pleaſures and Profits of this Life. They have no future Hopes, their Actions plainly ſhew it; and therefore, with very little Reluctance or Remorſe, they will ſacrifice what ſhould be held dear and valuable to All, and is ſo to all good and brave Men, the Honour and Intereſt of their Country, ſo that they may live at Eaſe, and enjoy themſelves.

Have you not obſerved in private Life, that Men devoted to unlawful Pleaſures, whom Vice has enſlaved, that to gratify their vicious Paſſions, Buſineſs has been neglected;

glected; and by the Diſeaſes and Diſorders contracted, they have been rendered incapable of tranſacting? And are not Men of a publick Character, if vicious and immoral, equally unfit and incapable to execute any thing to an Advantage? Are not the Families of private Perſons, by their Follies, expoſed to Poverty and Contempt? And have not States and Kingdoms experienced from the ſame Cauſe, the ſame unhappy Effects?

But it is Time to have done with a Subject ſo diſagreeable, though neceſſary, and haſten to ſome Reflections upon what has been ſaid; which, duly attended to, may prevent thoſe Conſequences happening to us, which have already happened to States not leſs flouriſhing and powerful.

Firſt, If God will aſſiſt thoſe who love him: And whom can he aſſiſt but ſuch, if it does not interfere with the eſtabliſhed Order and Government of the World? For to favour the Wicked, or not to favour the Righteous, would be an Encouragement to Wickedneſs, and leſſen the Obligations to the Practice of Virtue. Are not Exhortations to Piety and Goodneſs rendered needleſs? Shall we by this Means procure

the Divine Concurrence and Aſſiſtance in our Undertakings? Secure of his Protection, let the Enemy deviſe and contrive, it will be in vain. It belongs to a ſuperior Power to give Succeſs. We perceive then, that it is not only our Duty, but our Intereſt to be religious. In private Life, every one who is religious, is ſenſibly convinced of this Truth; and it need not be doubted, but that publick Virtue will meet with the ſame Reward: It is that which will effectually remove every Fear, make us more than Men, and ready and willing to encounter with any Difficulty and Danger.

The Calamities which are the certain Conſequences of War, are many and diſtreſſing: Not at all deſirable, if they can, conſiſtent with the publick Good and Safety, be avoided. There is no State, however rich and opulent, but may be impoveriſhed; however great and flouriſhing, but may be brought to Ruin by it. Whilſt it continues, it muſt be a Burden to the Subject; which if grievous, ought to be borne with Patience; if not, with Chearfulneſs: Becauſe it is difficult, if not impoſſible, to ſupport and carry on a War without ſuffering ſomething inconvenient and diſagreeable. But if it is really ſo, and we are deſirous of having it re-

removed, to whom can we apply for a ſpeedy and happy End, but to Him who alone can grant our Requeſt; to God? That our Requeſt will be granted, we may be aſſured, if we are careful to obſerve his Laws.

Secondly, To be an happy, we muſt endeavour to be a religious People. We muſt not think to conquer our Enemies, before we have ſubdued our Vices. Can it ſurpriſe, that the Hands ſhould be weak, and Courage fail, if the Heart is corrupt, and the Conſcience defiled? The beſt Support of Society is the Practice of Religion; and the Man who is religious, is its beſt and trueſt Friend.—Let us then lay aſide our Vices—Let us abſtain from every Pleaſure, which is criminal and unlawful—Let us not indulge ourſelves in any Thing, which may hurt the Underſtanding, or enfeeble the Body: For the contrary Behaviour is not only prejudicial to private Intereſt and Happineſs, but gives an Advantage to the Enemy, renders our Attempts very precarious, frequently unſucceſsful, and makes us an eaſy Prey to any Invader.

Few Ages can boaſt of ſuch a Spirit, as now reigns amongſt the People: Such a general

neral Desire of carrying on the War with Vigour and Resolution. This would be a Terror to the Enemy, provided, that the Head was not sick, the Heart faint, and the Knees feeble. They know, that Luxury and Effeminacy have within these few Years greatly spread amongst us; that our Morals are corrupted, and our Constitutions debauched: Too visible in our weak and sickly Offspring. They dread nothing so much as a Return to our ancient Temperance and Frugality; their own Annals acquainting them what they are then to expect from us. But alas! what have they to fear from Persons worn out in the Service of Luxury and Debauchery? More fit to be the Keepers of Women, than the Guardians of Men!

But thanks be to God, that the Nation is not totally vitiated: That there are not wanting Men, both Inferiors and Superiors, able and willing to serve their King, and defend their Country, from every Invader, either of its Liberty or Property. A Country, like the Land of *Canaan*, full and plenteous of all Manner of Store — A King, like *David*, esteemed and beloved by his People — A People, prepared to sacrifice their Lives and

and Fortunes for his Honour, and the Intereſt of the Publick.

May they ever be happy in a mutual Confidence—May no falſe Inſinuations, nor ungenerous Miſrepreſentations of miſtaken or pretended Friends, create Suſpicions and Jealouſies between them—May Honeſty and Integrity reign amongſt the Great, Loyalty and Religion amongſt the People; Zeal and Unanimity in all—May we undertake with Spirit, and execute with Vigour—May the Lord of Hoſts grant Succeſs, and the End be an honourable and laſting Peace.

To the Bleſſed Trinity be given all Power and Glory, now and for ever: Amen.

MIS-

MISTRANSLATIONS

AND

FALSE POSITIONS, &c.

MISTRANSLATIONS

AND

MISTAKEN POSITIONS, &c.

MISTRANSLATIONS AND FALSE POSITIONS OF THE HEBREW TEXT CORRECTED.

וישם יהוה לקין אות *And the Lord ſet a Mark upon Cain* *. Theſe Words are of dubious Signification, and have been differently tranſlated. The Variety of Opinions, which have been entertained, is briefly noted by Dr. Patrick in his Commentary; whoſe Remark upon them is, *that we muſt be content to be ignorant of their Meaning*. We ſhall not, however, follow the Doctor's Advice, but endeavour to remove the preſent Obſcurity. Our Tranſlation ſeems to countenance

* Geneſis iv. 15.

tenance the Conceit of the Rabbies, that *God branded him with a certain Mark on his Forehead*; and to agree with a modern, but not leſs weak and ridiculous Notion, that *he was changed into a Black*; from whom that Race of Men has been thought originally to have proceeded, not recollecting that it muſt have been entirely deſtroyed by the Flood: But the Original, without a forced Conſtruction, will admit another Senſe, more agreeable to the Situation of Cain at that Time, and more conſiſtent with the Context: *And the Lord* GAVE OR APPOINTED *unto Cain a Sign.* In the preceding Verſe he had expreſſed a Fear, leſt any one, fired with a juſt Reſentment againſt him for his cruel and unnatural Treatment towards an innocent Brother, ſhould retaliate the Injury. To remove this juſt Fear and Apprehenſion, God promiſes him Safety and Security, and by a certain, viſible and external Sign given to him, ratifies and confirms the Promiſe. After this Sign given, we read of no more Complaints, no more Expreſſions of Fear on Account of his Perſon, but aſſured of the divine Protection, he retired from the divine Preſence. The branding him with a Mark could have been no Security to his Perſon; it would not have

leſſened

leſſened but increaſed his Fears; for by it he would have been rather expoſed to, than concealed from his Enemies.

And Cain went out from the Preſence of the Lord and dwelt in the Land of Nod, on the Eaſt of Eden *. The Situation of the Land of Nod is unknown. The Hebrew נוד might be much better and more properly tranſlated, *a Fugitive*, which repreſents the Condition of Cain at that Time. God had pronounced this Curſe upon him; *A Fugitive and Vagabond ſhalt thou be in the Earth:* The ſacred Hiſtorian, therefore, very pertinently adds, after that the Divine Conference was ended, that he ſuffered the Curſe; *He dwelt in the Earth a Fugitive.* Removed from that Spot of Ground, which had before liberally yielded to him its Fruits, he wandered to and fro, not having any fixed Place of Reſidence, forſaken by Friends, ſhunned by Relations, and excluded the Privilege of appearing before the Divine Glory. There are two Words in this Chapter denoting the Earth האדמה and ארץ. The former having the ה Emphaticum prefixed, may ſignify the particular Spot of Ground, where our firſt Parents lived after their Expulſion out of Paradiſe,

* Gen. iv. 16.

which they cultivated; the Word originally meaning, *a tilled Ground:* The latter ארץ may be taken in a general Senſe, and denote *the whole Earth.* Theſe Words, *on the Eaſt of Eden,* muſt have Relation to and be connected with the former Part of this Verſe, becauſe it was the Place where the Divine Majeſty appeared, and the Angels kept Guard. This Verſe then, with Submiſſion, ſhould be thus tranſlated: *And Cain went out from the Preſence of the Lord,* (which was, or uſed to appear) *on the Eaſt of Eden, and dwelt in the Earth a Fugitive.*

Theſe are the Generations of Jacob *. The Reader muſt be ſurpriſed at this Expreſſion, when the Family of Jacob is not, as it might be expected, mentioned in the preceding Verſes. It ſhould be placed to Verſe the 26th of Chapter xxxv. if it is not a marginal Explanation, and inſerted into the Text by the Inaccuracy of a Tranſcriber. It is certain that it has no Connection with the Context, and is improperly introduced in this Place.

And Moſes ſaid thou haſt ſpoken well, I will ſee thy Face again no more †. How is this Expreſſion conſiſtent with the Conduct of Moſes in the ſubſequent Chapter; *And he went*

* Gen. xxxvii. 2. † Exodus x. 29.

out

out from Pharoah in a great Anger *. The laſt Plague to be inflicted, was the Slaughter of the firſt Born, of which Moſes was ſent to acquaint Pharaoh †; whoſe Obſtinacy in diſbelieving the Report occaſioned the Anger of Moſes ‡. The Threatning denounced againſt the firſt Born of Ægypt and Pharaoh occaſioned, it is probable, the ſevere Threatning from Pharaoh ‖, or his Pride might have been the Cauſe, which was much affected by the Words of Moſes, that he ſhould have no more Occaſion to intreat for the Departure of the Iſraelites, becauſe his own Servant § (by his Order as it ſeems ¶) would not only intreat, but be urgent upon them to depart. It may appear ſtrange, that Pharaoh, after ſo many Plagues inflicted, ſhould doubt of the Execution of this: But Pride made him forget himſelf, thinking it not poſſible that he ſhould turn Sollicitor; or, as from his former Behaviour he ſeems to have been of that Sort of Men, who credit nothing but what they ſee, he might have entertained a Diſtruſt of the Divine Power to effect it. What might have confirmed him in this Opinion was, that no Plague had been di-

* Exodus xi. 8. † xi. 4, 5. ‡ xi. 8. ‖ x. 28. § xi. 8. ¶ xii. 31, 33.

rectly and immediately inflicted upon the Perſons of his Subjects. The 10th and 11th Chapters I humbly conceive ſhould make but one; and the Verſes (being more agreeable with the Context, and the different Times in which the ſeveral Things related occurred) ſhould be placed in the following Manner: That the Reader may ſee the Propriety or Impropriety of the preſent, I ſhall oppoſe it to the old Reading in two diſtinct Columns.

C. x. V. 27. *But the Lord hardened Pharaoh's Heart, and he would not let them go.*

Old Reading.	New Reading.
28. And Pharaoh ſaid unto him, get thee from me, take heed to thyſelf, ſee my Face no more: for in that Day thou ſeeſt my Face, thou ſhalt die. C. x. 28.	28. And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, yet will I bring one Plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Ægypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he ſhall let you go, he ſhall ſurely thruſt you out hence altogether. C. xi. 1.
29. And Moſes ſaid, thou haſt ſpoken well, I will ſee thy Face again no more.	29. And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, Pharaoh ſhall not hearken unto you; that my Wonders may be multiplied
30. And	

Old Reading.	New Reading.
	tiplied in the Land of Ægypt. C. xi. 9.
30. And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, yet will I bring one Plague more upon Pharaoh, and upon Ægypt; afterwards he will let you go hence: when he ſhall let you go, he ſhall ſurely thruſt you out hence altogether.	30. Speak now in the Ears of the People, and let every Man borrow of his Neighbour, and every Woman of her Neighbour, Jewels of Silver and Jewels of Gold. C. xi. 2.
31. Speak now in the Ears of the People, and let every Man borrow of his Neighbour, and every Woman of her Neighbour, Jewels of Silver, and Jewels of Gold.	31. And the Lord gave the People Favour in the Sight of the Ægyptians *. C. xi. 3. in part.
32. And the Lord gave the People Favour in the Sight of the Ægyptians. *Moreover the Man Moſes was very great in the Land of Ægypt, in the Sight of Pharaoh's Servants, and in the Sight of the People.*	32. And Moſes ſaid, *(unto Pharaoh)* thus ſaith the Lord, about Midnight will I go into the midſt of Ægypt. C. xi. 4
33. And	33. And

* The latter Part of this Verſe ſeems to be a marginal Reading, and from thence crept into the Text. The Reaſon for ſuſpecting its Authority is, that it does not ſuit with the Meekneſs and Modeſty of Moſes to ſay thoſe Things of himſelf, which are there ſaid of him.

Old Reading.

33. And Moſes ſaid, Thus ſaith the Lord, about Midnight will I go out into the Midſt of Ægypt.

34 And all the firſt Born in the Land of Ægypt ſhall die, from the firſt Born of Pharaoh, that ſitteth upon his Throne, even unto the firſt Born of the Maid Servant, that is behind the Mill; and all the firſt Born of Beaſts.

35. And there ſhall be a great Cry throughout all the Land of Ægypt, ſuch as there was none like it, nor ſhall be like it any more.

36. But againſt any of the Children of Iſrael, ſhall not a Dog move his Tongue, againſt Man

New Reading.

33. And all the firſt Born in the Land of Ægypt ſhall die, from the firſt Born of Pharaoh, that ſitteth upon his Throne, even unto the firſt Born of the Maid Servant, that is behind the Mill; and all the firſt Born of Beaſts. C. xi. 6.

34, And there ſhall be a great Cry throughout all the Land of Ægypt, ſuch as there was none like it, nor ſhall be like it any more. C. xi. 6.

35. But againſt any of the Children of Iſrael, ſhall not a Dog move his Tongue, againſt Man or Beaſt: that ye may know, how that the Lord doth put a Difference between the Ægyptians and Iſrael. C. xi. 7.

36. And all theſe thy Servants ſhall come down unto me, and bow down themſelves unto me,

Old Reading.	New Reading.
Man or Beaſt: that ye may know, how that the Lord doth put a Difference between the Ægyptians and Iſrael.	me, ſaying, Get thee out, and all the People that follow thee; and after that I will go out. C. xi. V. 8. in part.
37. And all theſe thy Servants ſhall come down unto me, and bow down themſelves unto me, ſaying, Get thee out, and all the People that follow thee; and after that I will go out. *And he went out from Pharaoh in a great Anger.*	37. And Pharaoh ſaid unto him, Get thee from me, take heed to thyſelf, ſee my Face no more: for in that Day thou ſeeſt my Face, thou ſhalt die. C. x. 28.
38. And the Lord ſaid unto Moſes, Pharaoh ſhall not hearken unto you: that my Wonders may be multiplied in the Land of Ægypt.	38. And Moſes ſaid, Thou haſt ſpoken well, I will ſee thy face again no more. (C. x. 29.) And he went out from Pharaoh in a great Anger.

This Diſpoſition of the Verſes reflects Light upon what would otherwiſe be obſcure and inconſiſtent with the Context: For if theſe two Chapters are conſidered as diſtinct, and read as they ſtand both in the Original and Tranſlation, it is evident, from C. xi. 8. that Moſes was in the Preſence of Pharaoh, after he had forbidden him any more to appear before him C. x. 28. and

after he (Moſes) had aſſured him that he would ſee his Face again no more. C. x. v. 29.

*And the Children of Iſrael alſo wept again**. In the Tranſlation the Hebrew ישבו is omitted, and inſerted in the Margin: But there the juſt and proper Senſe of it is not preſerved. Its Radix ſhould be ישב not שוב as agreeing better with the Context, and more ſtrongly deſcriptive of the obſtinate and perverſe, the reſtleſs and uneaſy Temper of the Jews. In the ſubſequent Verſe we find them longing after, what they deemed, the good Things of Ægypt; of ſo mean and abject a Spirit, that they would have been content to have continued in a State of Slavery, provided that they could have fed upon Garlick, Onions, &c. rather than enjoy their Liberty, live under the Protection of a peculiar Providence, and for a ſmall Space of Time feed upon wholſome, if common Food. The rendering the Original, *they ſat down*, ſtrongly expreſſes the Heinouſneſs of the Sin committed. They wanted Fleſh, and unleſs it was given they reſolved not to march forward, but to ſit down or

* Numbers xi. 4.

remain

remain in the Place where they were encamped. The Paſſage then ſhould be thus rendered, *and the Children of Iſrael alſo* SAT DOWN *and wept.*

And Moab was diſtreſſed *. Thus our Tranſlation: But more agreeable to the Conduct and Behaviour of their Prince, *was rouſed*, which the Original קוץ ſignifies, that is, ſought how to avoid the Danger, which the Appearance of the Iſraelites had made him apprehenſive of. This he does by ſending for and immediately holding a Conſultation with the Princes of Midian his Allies or Tributaries. The Reſolution of which was to ſend to Balaam, that from him who was acknowledged to be a Prophet, they might learn what would be the Conſequence of oppoſing the Iſraelites.

In ſuch and ſuch a Place ſhall be my Camp §. The Septuagint and our Tranſlation have taken no Notice of the Hebrew פלני אלמני which may denote, *an ambuſcade*; which from the Advice of the Prophet to the King of Iſrael †, and the Queſtion of Benhadad to the Officers of his Army ‖, ſeems to be intimated. The Word פלני being de-

* Numbers xxii. 3. § 2 Kings, ch. vi. 8.
† 9. ‖ 11.

rived

rived from פלה ſegregari, ſeperari, may ſignify certain Detachments from the Syrian Army, and אלמי being derived from אלם obmutuit, mutus redditus fuit, may ſerve to expreſs the ſecret Manner, in which the Syrian Troops ſhould meet at the Place of Rendezvous, where the Camp was to be pitched, and when met, how they were to be encamped; which we find to be true *: The Situation of the Syrian Army being unknown to the King of Iſrael, before the Prophet acquainted him with it. The Paſſage might be thus rendered. *In ſuch a Place ſhall my Forces or Troops encamp ſecretly.*

Then Abraham fell upon his Face, and laughed, and ſaid in his Heart, ſhall a Child be born unto him that is an hundred Years old? and ſhall Sarah, that is ninety Years old bear? And Abraham ſaid unto God, O that Iſhmael might live before thee! ‡ Abraham is highly and juſtly celebrated for his extraordinary Faith. The leaving his Native Country for an unknown and uncertain Poſſeſſion, is an illuſtrious Proof of it, and his Confidence in the Promiſe of a Son, when we conſider the Time of Life is as ſingular. Notwithſtanding the Character of Abraham through

* 2 Kings 9. ‡ Gen. xvii. 17, 18.

the

the whole Life ſeems to be conſiſtent, betraying nothing of Fickleneſs and Inconſtancy, of Doubt and Deſpondency, yet theſe Verſes ſeem to intimate a Diſtruſt of the Divine Promiſe. The Chaldee and Arabic tranſlate the Original, *he laughed for Joy*, knowing what Comfort and Conſolation it would be to Sarah, who on Account of her Barrenneſs had been expoſed to the Inſolence and Deriſion of a Slave. *O that Iſhmael migh live before thee!* Does not imply a Doubt of Abraham's concerning the Promiſe, as if he had deſired that Iſhmael might be the Perſon to inherit the Bleſſing, promiſed to him and his Seed, becauſe he judged it to be impoſſible to have another Son: For it is a Prayer offered up to God, that he would bleſs Iſhmael; it is a Recommendation of him to the Care of his Providence. This appears from Verſe 20th, and the Original will bear this Senſe, *I wiſh or pray that Iſhmael may live before thee:* that is, that thou wilt take him under thy ſpecial Care and Protection, as well as the Son whom thou haſt now promiſed, bleſs Iſhmael as well as Iſaac. God's Anſwer ſeems to intimate this to have been the Requeſt*;

* Gen. xvii. 20.

and

and the Succeſs of Iſhmael's Poſterity ſhewed it.

And when Sarai dealt hardly with her, ſhe (Hagar) fled from her Face *. The Hebrew עני ſignifies *humbled*, as well as *afflicted*. There is no Reaſon for believing that Sarai impoſed more upon her than ſhe could or ought to bear, or that ſuch Treatment was the Cauſe of her abſconding. Her Pride had induced her to think that ſhe was upon a Level with her Miſtreſs, in all probability behaved as if ſhe was, and alſo treated her with Scorn and Deriſion, as appears from the ſacred Hiſtorian, v. 4. and from Sarai's Complaint to Abraham §: She might have flattered herſelf with the Hopes of Abraham's approving, at leaſt not reſenting her Conduct, but the Joy of having a Son did not get the better of the Patriarch's Affection to his Wife. After this Diſappointment ſhe could not brook a Return to a ſervile State, in which any juſt Commands might by her be thought hard and cruel. This appears from what the Angel ſays to her after her Departure, *Return to thy Miſtreſs, and ſubmit thyſelf under her Hands* ‖.

* Gen. xvi. 6. § 5. ‖ 9.

Which

Which plainly intimates, that ſhe had not behaved with that Reſpect and Deference ſhe ought to have done. I think therefore That Sarai is clear from the odious Character of a cruel and revengeful Miſtreſs; as the original Word will very eaſily bear an Interpretation different from our Tranſlation.

Exodus xxiv. 1, 2. Theſe two Verſes are improperly placed. We read (Chap. xx. 21.) that after the Delivery of the Commandments, Moſes alone goes up into the Mount, when ſeveral Civil and Religious Precepts were given. This Account beginning at Chapter xx. 22. is ſuppoſed to end at Chapter xxiii. 33. But the following Verſes of Chapter xxiv. viz. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8. ſhould be added: Wherein the Deſcent of Moſes from the Mount, his communicating to the People the Laws he had received from God, the entering them into Records, the making a general Sacrifice, and the People's unanimous and voluntary Aſſent to pay Obedience to them, ſignified by joining in and aſſiſting at the Sacrifice, are deſcribed. It is evident from Chapter xix. 24. that only Moſes and Aaron were in the Mount, and from Chapter xx. 21. that the divine

divine Precepts were communicated to Moſes alone. So that the Verſes ſhould be placed as above, and the 1ſt and 2d of the 24th Chapter follow the 8th, which have a plain and juſt Connection with the ſubſequent, but not preceding Verſes, they relating to two diſtinct Communications of the Divine Will at different Times.

FINIS.

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